Tacitus the Epic Successor

VIRGIL, LUCAN, AND THE NARRATIVE OF CIVIL WAR IN THE *HISTORIES*

TIMOTHY A. JOSEPH

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By

Timothy A. Joseph

TUTA SUB AEGIDE PALLAS · 1683 ·

BRILL

LEIDEN · BOSTON
2012

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Joseph, Timothy A.
Tacitus the epic successor : Virgil, Lucan, and the narrative of civil war in the Histories / by Timothy A. Joseph.
pages. cm. – (Mnemosyne supplements ; volume 345)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-90-04-22904-4 (hardback : alk. paper) – ISBN 978-90-04-23128-3 (e-book)
1. Tacitus, Cornelius. Annales. 2. Tacitus, Cornelius. Historiae. 3. Rome–Historiography. 4. Virgil. 5. Lucan, 39-65. I. Title. II. Series: Mnemosyne, bibliotheca classica Batava. Supplementum ; v. 345.

DG206.T32J67 2012
937'.07–dc23

2012016508

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual "Brill" typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities. For more information, please see www.brill.nl/brill-typeface.

ISSN 0169-8958
ISBN 978 90 04 22904 4 (hardback)
ISBN 978 90 04 23128 3 (e-book)

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UXORI CARISSIMÆ

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PREFACE

My inquiry into Tacitus' relationship with Virgil and Lucan began with the work for my doctoral dissertation, which I completed at Harvard University in May 2007. For the present volume much has been added, much subtracted, and quite a bit of material overhauled. For help with this project over the past several years I have many to thank.

Richard Thomas has been a source of intellectual inspiration and of support *ab ovo*. He served as my dissertation director, read and commented on a draft of the entire book manuscript at a late stage, and has been of help in innumerable other ways over the years. I also owe much to Kathleen Coleman, who stood on my dissertation committee and improved the work in many ways with her comments, and has at all times been generous with her time, counsel, and encouragement. I am similarly grateful for the careful eyes and expertise of Christopher Krebs, the final member of my committee.

We are now in an *aetas Taciteana*, with a rich abundance of monographs, commentaries, companions, and readers either recently published or now in the works. No scholar is more responsible for this boom in Tacitean studies than Tony Woodman. To him I am eminently thankful for reading an entire draft of this study and offering invaluable critiques, corrections, and suggestions, big and small. The astonishing speed with which Tony did this is further testament to his generosity. Over the past few years I have also benefited from conversation and correspondence about points of detail in this book, or about Tacitus more generally, with Salvador Bartera, Christopher Whitton, and Melanie Marshall, who kindly shared with me a section of her own ongoing work on Tacitus' relationship with Lucan. Elizabeth Keitel also generously sent a copy of her recent writing on Tacitus to me. And I owe many thanks to the book's anonymous readers, whose comments and corrections have improved it in countless ways. All remaining errors, obfuscations, and oversights are my own doing. I am also appreciative of the assistance and timeliness of Caroline van Erp, Irene van Rossum, and the rest of the editorial staff at Brill.

Parts of the Introduction and of Chapter 3 appeared in an earlier form in the chapter titled "*Ac rursus noua laborum facies*: Tacitus' Repetition of Virgil's Wars at *Histories* 3.26–34" in *Latin Historiography and Poetry in the Early Empire: Generic Interactions* (Brill, 2010). I am grateful to the editors of that volume, John F. Miller and Tony Woodman, along with John Jacobs,

for reading and commenting on the chapter. Some arguments in the Introduction and Chapter 1 first appeared in my introductory chapter "Tacitus and Epic," in *A Companion to Tacitus* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), edited by Victoria E. Pagán, whom I thank for her helpful remarks on the chapter. And some of the material in Chapter 1 on *Histories* 1.50 has drawn upon my chapter "*Repetita bellorum ciuilium memoria*: The remembrance of civil war and its literature in Tacitus, *Histories* 1.50" in *Time and Narrative in Ancient Historiography: The 'Plupast' from Herodotus to Appian* (Cambridge University Press, 2012). I thank the editors of that volume, Jonas Grethlein and Christopher Krebs, as well as Andrew Feldherr, for their constructive comments on the chapter. I also thank Cambridge University Press for permission to include the material here.

For support of my work I am thankful to the President and to the Dean's Office at the College of the Holy Cross, who granted a semester of Junior Research Leave in the fall of 2009, as well as Research and Publication Awards in the springs of 2008, 2009, and 2010. I am also grateful to the Trustees of the Loeb Classical Library Foundation for the generous fellowship for the 2009–2010 academic year. For support of a different sort—advice about the book-production process—I offer thanks to Lee Fratantuono, Ed O'Donnell, Irene Peirano, and Michael Putnam. My dear old friends Justin Lake, Andy Miller, and John Schafer have also provided much support and encouragement through the years.

Special thanks go to many people in the Department of Classics at my *alma mater* Holy Cross. I was fortunate in the fall of 1994 to be introduced to Tacitus, and Tacitean manipulation of language, by the late Professor Gerard Lavery. I am greatly indebted to John D.B. Hamilton, with whom I have had many fruitful conversations over the years about classical literature—including, years ago now, a thoughtful discussion about Tacitus and poetry. With my colleagues Nancy Andrews, Mary Ebbott, Eugenia Lao, Ellen Perry, Aaron Seider, and Neel Smith I have also had many stimulating conversations about history and epic and much else. Edward Vodoklys, S.J., has long been a steady source of encouragement, warmth, and perspective. The counsel and support of Thomas R. Martin—always giving of his time and sage advice—have been invaluable to me. And, for nearly twenty years now, Blaise Nagy has been a pillar of support; the times he has come to my assistance on matters big and small are too many to count.

I owe much to my uncle and godfather Lawrence Joseph, who has given advice on many practical matters, and has always urged me to seek out the World of Ideas. Robert and Sarah Joseph, *parentes optimi*, have been

my greatest intellectual guides. I hope that the love of words and of close reading that they have demonstrated to me is evident in this book.

My greatest debt is to my wife Kelly, to whom I dedicate this book. I cannot thank her sufficiently for her help on countless things related to the production of this book, and, most of all, for her patient and unfailing love. I am eternally grateful for the gift of joy that she and our daughter Anna, full of life, bring to me each day.

The texts I have used are Heubner's (1978) for the *Histories* and Koestermann's (1965) for the *Annals*. The rare instances when I diverge from these texts are noted. Translations are my own, with consideration of the translations by Church and Brodribb (1942), Wellesley (1964), and Woodman (2004).

Worcester, Massachusetts
March 2012

INTRODUCTION

TACITUS THE EPIC SUCCESSOR

The civil warring of 69 CE, and of the narrative of the *Histories*, is at a peak of chaos and violence. Vitellius, the year's third emperor, is still in power, but his army is barely holding onto its camp outside Cremona, in the face of repeated attacks from Vespasian's forces. The challengers at last reach the camp's walls, and the result of their assault, as Tacitus tells us at *Histories* 3.28, is gruesome:

> integri cum sauciis, semineces cum exspirantibus uoluuntur, uaria pereuntium forma et **omni imagine mortium**.
>
> The unhurt were rolled up with the wounded, the half-dead with the barely breathing, with various forms of the perishing, and every image of death.

The gory scene at the Vitellian camp is arresting, and it gains greater potency, and meaning, through the recollection of a similar passage in Virgil's *Aeneid*. At *Aeneid* 2.364–369 Aeneas recalls the scene at Troy after the first fit of fighting with the invading Greeks. The culmination of Aeneas' remembrance of that scene is that "everywhere was cruel grief, everywhere fear, and many an image of death" (2.368–369: *crudelis ubique* | *luctus, ubique pauor et* **plurima mortis imago**). Virgil's succinct articulation of the variety of deaths at Troy, *plurima mortis imago*, was not novel. For example, Thucydides writes similarly of the bloodshed at Corcyra, at 3.81.5: πᾶσά τε ἰδέα κατέστη θανάτου ("and every form of death was there"). But the poet's phrasing, as so often, found many imitators. Ovid and Petronius adapt the phrase, and Jerome twice quotes the phrase directly, when describing the devastations of Rome by northern invaders in the fourth and fifth centuries.[1]

Jerome uses Virgil's phrase in order to equate the ravaged, falling Rome of his time with the Troy of *Aeneid* 2. Tacitus' intent at *Histories* 3.28 is similar, but with a meaningful difference. His phrase *omni imagine mortium* recalls Virgil's *plurima mortis imago*, but also conspicuously outdoes it, surpasses it in its depiction of death. Virgil's "very many" (*plurima*) becomes

[1] See Ovid, *Trist.* 1.11.23; Petronius, *Sat.* 124; and Jerome, *Ep.* 60.16 and 127.12. On the phrase's afterlife see further Austin (1964) on *Aen.* 2.361ff. and 2.369, as well as Heubner (1963–1982) and Wellesley (1972) on *Hist.* 3.28.

the all-inclusive "every" (*omni*). Correspondingly, the poet's singular "death" (*mortis*) is pluralized into *mortium*. And Tacitus outdoes his predecessor here in one more way, through his use of adjacent, closely related, intensifying phrases, the effect of "theme and variation" that Virgil himself used often.[2] Firstly, there is a marked escalation in Tacitus' movement from the unhurt (*integri*) to the wounded (*sauciis*), and then to the more viscerally described half-dead (*semineces*) and barely breathing (*exspirantibus*). Then, of the dead themselves, the phrase *uaria pereuntium forma* is redoubled but also amplified in the final, totalizing *omni imagine mortium*. The phrases and images pile up, capturing with great immediacy the piling up of bodies. Through the adaptation and expansion of Virgil's phrase, we see, Tacitus bids the reader to recall the famously deathly scene at Virgil's Troy; but he also makes sure that there is more carnage and more death at Cremona, that his scene is emphatically and emulatively *worse*.

This passage is typical of how Tacitus alludes and responds to Virgil in Books 1–3 of the *Histories*. In this study I will look closely at passages such as this one, in which the historian adapts and expands upon words, phrases, moments, and images from the *Aeneid*, and from Lucan's *Bellum Civile*. Modern readers have had a lot to say about Tacitus' engagement with these two poems in given passages. I will argue here that the emulative allusions to these poems in *Histories* 1–3 complement and build upon each other, and contribute significantly to the picture of repetitive, escalating civil war that Tacitus presents in the work. As we shall see, of the two it is Virgil's presentation of war that Tacitus builds upon most consistently.[3] But very often he also brings Lucan into his civil wars, and frequently engages with the two poets simultaneously, at times prioritizing the escalated, darker vision of civil war and its causes that the *Bellum Civile* depicts.

[2] On Virgil's use of this effect, also known as *dicolon abundans*, see Quinn (1968) 423–428, O'Hara (1997) 248, and Conte (2007) 30, 100–101. The accumulation of coordinated terms is also called *enumeratio*, on which see Lausberg (1998) § 669–674. I am thankful to John Miller for his remarks to me on the emulative adaptation of *plurima* with *omni*.

[3] In a short discussion of poetic influence on Tacitus, Syme (1958) 357 concludes: "It is Virgil who dominates." For other modern assessments of the extent of Virgil's and Lucan's influence on Tacitus, see notes 17 and 26 below. While, to co-opt Syme's phrase, I do think that it is Virgil and Lucan who dominate, my line of inquiry could perhaps profitably be extended to Tacitus' relationship with the Flavian poets. Helpful preliminary work has been done by Burck (1971), who considers some thematic points of contact between Tacitus and the early imperial poets, with a focus on Lucan and Statius' *Thebaid*. See too Burck (1953) for another (and more impressionistic) comparison of Tacitus and Statius. Arguments have also been made for Tacitean allusion in specific passages to Homer (Mayer (2003)), Naevius (Ash (1997)), Ennius (Morgan (1993) and Ash (2007a) 270), and Silius Italicus (Lauletta (1998) 267 and now Manolaraki and Augoustakis (2012)).

All of this is not to discount Tacitus' place in the Greek and Roman historiographical tradition, an issue that will come up often in this study. At several points I will look at passages in which Tacitus appears to fashion himself as an author writing in *both* the historiogrphical and epic traditions, that is, as one who creatively fuses the genres together—in so doing demonstrating their fundamental closeness. To this end, while looking comprehensively at cases of Tacitean allusion to Virgil and Lucan in the *Histories*, I will also address, in a complementary way, certain narrative and stylistic methods that the historian shares with writers of epic. For example, I will discuss how and why he employs an *in medias res* opening, as well as a catalogue of combatants, at the outset of the *Histories*, and then a thematically pivotal "proem in the middle" at the midpoint of Books 1–3. And throughout this study I will consider the historian's use of devices such as enallage, hendiadys, and polyptoton—the "employment of more extraordinary words and freer figures" of which Quintilian writes in his famous discussion of the kinship between historiography and epic.[4] In these ways, this study also aims to unpack the *Histories* as a "case in point" of how ancient historiography was, in Quintilian's words, *proxima poetis*.

Virgil, Tacitus, and the Trope of Repetition

One of Quintilian's chief points of comparison between historiography and epic is that each is written *ad narrandum*, "to tell a story." The literary strategy that Tacitus shares with epic poets to which I will give the most attention, and which, I will argue, works in concert with his allusive interaction with Virgil and Lucan in the *Histories*, is a narrative one: the use of the trope of repetition. Philip Hardie, in his study *The Epic Successors of Virgil*, writes of epic poetry:

---

[4] Quint.'s assessment at 10.1.31 reads: *est enim proxima poetis, et quodam modo carmen solutum est, et scribitur ad narrandum, non ad probandum, totumque opus non ad actum rei pugnamque praesentem sed ad memoriam posteritatis et ingenii famam componitur: ideoque et uerbis remotioribus et liberioribus figuris narrandi taedium euitat*. His use of *proxima*, which often describes familial ties (*OLD* 7), is apt, in that Greek and Roman historiography was in a way a descendent of Homeric epic (note e.g. the concern for giving κλέος that Herod. announces at *Hist.* 1 pref.). On this generic proximity see further Strasburger (1972), Häussler (1976) 21–38, Wiseman (1979) esp. 143–153, Woodman (1988) esp. 1–9, 28–31, 35, 38, and 98–101, and (1989), Feeney (1991) 250–262, the full-length study by Foucher (2000), as well as Devillers (2003) 108–114 and Leigh (2007). See also the essays collected in Levene and Nelis (2002) and Miller and Woodman (2010), incl. Damon (2010c), who discusses Quint. 10.1.31–34 at 69–70.

> As a product of the oral tradition epic has a set towards continuation; from these origins it also carries with it the habit of repetition, the repetition of verbal formulas, scenes, themes and structures.[5]

Repetition, a reflective repetition, is an essential part of the fabric of the *Aeneid*, where "meaning ... is largely generated through the repetition of situations and actions; as the actors move through space and time they seem condemned to relive the experiences of their pasts."[6] Virgil's repetitive program is most apparent in his narration of the Latin War, whose events he continually presents as reenactments of the events of the Trojan War.[7] As a climax, the burning of the Latin capital in Book 12 reads like a grim repetition of the burning of Troy in Book 2.[8] The reenactment in *Aeneid* 7–12 differs from the events at Troy, however, in that Virgil develops the war in Italy as a civil one, fought between once[9] and future countrymen; the proto-Romans of the *Aeneid* are doomed to re-fight the war at Troy, but at the hands of each other. Virgil's epic successors extend the *Aeneid*'s intratextual repetitive program into their own poems. For example, Lucan (as we shall address shortly) translates and expands the repetitiveness of Virgil's wars into the eternal repetitiveness, or endlessness, of civil war. Hardie's study considers how and why Lucan and other imperial epic poets (Ovid, Statius, Valerius Flaccus, and Silius Italicus) "repeat," both inter- and intratextually.[10]

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5 Hardie (1993a) 14.

6 Hardie (1993a) 15, who builds on the work of Quint (1993) 50–96, which I discuss below. On repetition in the *Aen.* see also Kennedy (1997) and Conte (2007) 41–43, notes 23 and 25. At 30–31 Conte discusses Virgil's fundamental reflectiveness: "The Virgilian image seems intended to grow through the power of continuous reflection. It is an open, unbounded representation" (31). Sparrow (1931) catalogues the repetition of lines and half-lines in Virgil's works, with little literary analysis.

7 Parallels between episodes in the Trojan War and Latin War are treated at length by Anderson (1957), Knauer (1964) 370–527, Williams (1983) 94–100, and Quint (1993) 50–96. See also the discussions by Hardie (1993a) 15–18 and Rossi (2004) 171–178, on the Latin War "not as a retreat from but as a return to or repetition of the epic war par excellence, the Trojan War" (178).

8 See Putnam (1965) 175–177 and Rossi (2004) 175–178 on the verbal and structural similarities in the depictions of the falls of Troy and the Latin capital.

9 Virgil highlights the founder of Troy Dardanus' status as a native of Italy at *Aen.* 3.167–168, 7.205–211, and 7.240–241. Horsfall (2000) on 7.206–211 considers whether Virgil invented this detail. On civil war in the *Aen.*, see e.g. Harrison (1988), esp. 63–66, Cairns (1989), 85–108, Hardie (1993b), Horsfall (1995), 155–161 (with further bibliography), Zetzel (1997), Rossi (2010), and Quint (2010).

10 At 116–119 Hardie relates his study of poetic succession to the influential work of Bloom (1973) on the "anxiety of influence."

Like these poets, and like other historians,[11] Tacitus works freely and meaningfully with the trope of repetition. A conspicuous example from the *Annals* is instructive. Tacitus opens *Annals* 13, and Nero's reign, by stating: **prima nouo principatu** *mors Iunii Silani proconsulis* (13.1.1: "The first death in the new principate was that of the proconsul Julius Silanus"). In its diction and chilling directness the line strikingly recalls the opening of Tiberius' reign in *Annals* 1: **primum** *facinus* **noui principatus** *fuit Postumi Agrippae caedes* (1.6.1: "The first deed of the new principate was the murder of Postumus Agrippa"). The Neronian narrative thus emerges straightaway as one that will repeat the horrors of the Tiberian one. After a lengthy discussion of the interplay between these two lines and their contexts, R.H. Martin remarked: "The composite picture has a unity, bearing the imprint of Tacitus' own personality, that enables us significantly to describe the narrative as 'Tacitean.' "[12]

For Martin, the meaningfully repetitive method at work in *Annals* 1.6.1 and then 13.1.1 is fundamental, essential to Tacitus' style.[13] I agree with him entirely. And in this study I will look at what is Tacitus' most elaborate use of the trope of repetition: his presentation of civil war in the *Histories*. Battles, murders, and other miseries are continually repeated in this work. The repetitions occur throughout the civil wars proper of the year 69 CE, the contests fought between Galba and Otho, Otho and Vitellius, and Vitellius

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11 Kraus (1994b and 1998) looks at Livy's use of repetition. At (1998) 280–283 she allies her approach with Quint's approach to the *Aeneid*, as I do here with Tacitus.

12 Martin (1955) 128. Woodman (1997) 92 aptly describes the beginning of Tacitus' Neronian narrative at *Ann.* 13.1.1 as an "action replay" of the beginning of the Tiberian narrative. Woodman (1998) 23–39 (*contra* Martin (1981) 162) makes the case that a significant similarity between the two opening crimes is that Tacitus presents each as orchestrated by the emperor's mother (Livia, then Agrippina).

13 The words of Keddie (1975) 54 (cited by Goodyear (1972–1981) on *Ann.* 1.59.6) are spot-on: "One of the noteworthy aspects of Tacitean narrative is its striving for internal artistic unity. The use of words and phrases, and even of whole episodes in their essentials, repetitiously and in key places, is an integral part of the technique. The literary allusions are rarely coincidental, for the historian does not limit the impact of an episode in time; rather he means it to illuminate a similar occurrence." See too O'Gorman (2000) 144–175 on the "entrapment of Nero in repetition" (146) in the *Ann.* Damon (2006) looks at Tacitus' incorporation of similar minor episodes and details into his portrayals of Galba, Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian in the *Hist.* and concludes that these repetitions "are present in the text because Tacitus wanted the reader to see the parallels and contrasts, not because these events demanded inclusion" (276). And see Keitel's (1987 and 1991) discussions of parallels among the speeches in the *Hist.*, as well as her valuable remarks at (2010) 349–351. Woodman (1979), on Tacitean "self-imitation," is also relevant, along with Woodman (2006), on the parallels that Tacitus draws between the mutinies in Pannonia and Germany in *Ann.* 1.

and Vespasian, as narrated in Books 1–3.[14] As we shall see, Tacitus also creatively makes the theme of repetitive, ongoing civil war stretch beyond the termini of the opening of Book 1 and the close of Book 3.[15]

In something of an aside to his argument about Tacitus' intratextual, repetitive method, Martin compares this Tacitean feature with the narrative manner of Virgil.[16] This is precisely the comparison that I am making. Readers of the *Histories* and *Annals* have long remarked on Tacitus' "epic" or Virgilian style. The comment by J.W. Mackail, writing his *Latin Literature* in 1895, is representative: "Throughout, as one reads the *Histories*, one is reminded of the *Aeneid*, not only by particular phrases, but by a more indefinable quality permeating the style."[17] A big part of this "indefinable quality" is, I think, Tacitus' meaningfully repetitive manner, his way of revisiting scenes and themes, making them linger, live on, develop, and grow in his narrative—and so demanding the reader's reflection on those scenes and themes.

Furthermore, while sharing a repetitive narrative strategy with Virgil and other epic poets, Tacitus also—as I began to discuss by way of example at the outset of this Introduction—refers specifically to Virgil's repetitive wars in the crafting of his own repetitive civil wars in the *Histories*. By repeating images, events, characters, and themes from Virgil's wars, Tacitus extends them into the civil wars of his narrative. Throughout, as we shall see, this engagement with Virgil complements or gives roots to the *Histories*' intratextual repetitive program. Tacitus takes Virgil's rich repetitiveness and runs with it: the program that was intratextual in the *Aeneid* is intertextually brought into the *Histories*, and then intratextually drawn out, continued, repeated.

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[14] The most recent modern historical account of the events of the year 69 is Morgan (2006). See also Wellesley (1989^2) and Murison (1993).

[15] As I shall explore at points in the body of this study and at greater length in the Epilogue.

[16] The quotation reads, at Martin (1955) 123: "A similar effect [to the effect of intertextual allusion] may be obtained—as it often is in Virgil—when the author echoes his own language to stress the parallelism between two passages." In a similar vein Woodman (1988) 169 (also in passing) compares Tacitus' handling of time, in its focus on "the interplay of present and past," with Virgil's.

[17] Mackail (1895) 218–219. See too the similarly impressionistic observations from Walker (1952) 155 ("Not only [Tacitus'] language, but the scale of his historical conception can be called epic and in particular Virgilian"); Syme (1958) 357 ("Virgil had an especial value for Tacitus. Colouring, atmosphere, and emotion, the poet furnished everything that Livy had, and more"); Benario (1975) 89 ("There is a poetic quality, both in the choice of vocabulary and in the construction, which calls to mind the favorite devices of Vergil and Lucan"); and, more recently, Jenkyns (2005) 573 ("Tacitus … might be called the most Virgilian of Latin prose writers").

And escalated. I argue here that Tacitus, as much as the imperial poets writing in the first century CE, is an "epic successor of Virgil." And it is not mere continuation of epic repetitiveness that we encounter in the *Histories*. David Quint has discussed the tension in the *Aeneid* between two types of repetition: progressive, the kind that repeats and thus masters the past, and regressive, the kind that repeats the past only to remain stuck there. Aeneas seems to experience both types in the *Aeneid*.[18] As I discussed above, Virgil casts the Latin War in Books 7–12 as a repetition of the Trojan War. It is progressive for Aeneas in that this time he plays the role of the "Greek" winner; the defeat of the Trojan War is mastered and overcome by the victorious repetition of it in the Latin War. But the war is at the same time a regressive repetition, since it is a civil war, fought between proto-Romans. The poem, written with the backdrop of a century of civil strife at Rome, concludes with Aeneas standing over the slain Turnus, a fellow proto-Roman whom Virgil has carefully constructed as a mirror of Aeneas; and so "Aeneas seems to be victimizing himself even as he undoes his former victimization."[19] When Tacitus comes to repeat Virgil's wars in the *Histories*, and then extend them intratextually, such regressive repetition prevails, with little of the progressive repetitive thread to be found. To be sure, a kind of stability comes in the form of Vespasian's victory. But Tacitus, writing the *Histories* in the first decade of the second century, had the perspective to know that Vespasian's victory in time resulted in his son Domitian's despotic fifteen-year reign.[20] My focus in this study is on *Histories* 1–3, but in the Epilogue to my core argument I will look at how Tacitus extends the theme of repetitive civil war into the beginnings of the Flavian era in Book 4. There I will also consider how he might have carried on that theme, in a regressive movement, across the entirety of the *Histories*, which concluded with the narration of Domitian's reign.

While regressive repetition prevails in the extant *Histories*, and certainly in Tacitus' adaptation of Virgilian scenes and motifs, in this deepening and worsening of Virgil's repetitiveness, Tacitus' creative process—his literary program—emerges as one of progressive repetition. In this regard the historian's response to Virgil is a lot like Lucan's: each successor aims to outdo

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18 Quint (1993) 50–96, whose discussion draws on the work of Brooks (1984), in particular 99–100.

19 Quint (1993) 80.

20 I follow Birley (2000) 241 in dating the completion of the *Hist.* to 109–110.

the poet in his presentation of Roman war. The repetitiveness that Virgil imbeds in his depiction of war is embraced with great enthusiasm and inventiveness by Lucan. For example, he casts the civil wars between Marius and Sulla, recalled by an eyewitness to them at *BC* 2.67–233, as ominous, soon-to-be-repeated models for the wars of the next generation.[21] And Lucan's manner of repeatedly calling Pharsalus, the site of the decisive clash between Caesar and Pompey and the main event of the poem, by the name "Philippi," the site of another civil-war battle some seven years after Pharsalus,[22] is also representative of the way in which the poet proleptically infuses the *Bellum Civile* with indications of civil war's inevitable repetition.[23] Perhaps most hauntingly, the principate itself emerges from the poem as a sort of repetition or perpetutation of civil war, in that the Caesarism that holds together and defines the principate is a direct result and, in that sense, an extension of the Caesarean victory that the poem narrates.[24]

And throughout his portrait of civil war, Lucan builds upon and meaningfully contorts Virgil's visions of war and of Rome.[25] At times in *Histories* 1–3, the more disquieting and even "over the top" images of civil war's repetitiveness that Lucan offers, as well as his expansive and frequently subversive responses to Virgil, are most attractive to Tacitus. In such cases, as in Tacitus' faulting of divine anger and human madness, my focus will fall on the historian's engagement with Lucan, or on his meaningful identifications of a source of thematic tension between the two poets.

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[21] See e.g. the elder's words at 2.223–224: *haec rursus patienda manent, hoc ordine belli | ibitur, hic stabit ciuilibus exitus armis*. On the assertions of civil war's repetitiveness inherent in this passage, see Henderson (1987) 129–133, as well as Fantham (1992) ad loc. I return to this passage and its similarities with *Hist.* 1.50 in Chapter 1.

[22] This identification is developed from Virgil, *Geo.* 1.489–492, and will be discussed fully in Chapter 1, vis-à-vis *Hist.* 1.50.2.

[23] Henderson (1987), who has observations about Lucanian repetition throughout his piece, puts this well at 133: "what (little) *is* to be narrated, the build-up to, account of and sequel to Pharsalus, is one representative slice through a spiral." On the sense of the endlessness of civil war that Lucan creates, see also Masters (1992) 216–259.

[24] A viewpoint that Lucan articulates most clearly at 7.638–646. See too 10.532–533, with Henderson (1987) 133. On Lucan's presentation of the loss of Roman freedom in the *BC*, see Johnson (1987) 86–100, Quint (1993) 151–157, and Gowing (2005) 92–95.

[25] On Lucan's (typically combative) response to Virgil, see, for starters, Thompson and Bruère (1968), Ahl (1976) 64–75 and *passim*, Hardie (1993a) *passim*, and Roche (2009) 20–24. And see Narducci (1979) 25–30 on the particular issue of Lucan's application of Virgil's reflections on civil war to his own civil war.

Epic Allusion in the Histories

The argument I have proposed for Tacitus as a conscious, emulative "epic successor" relies on the many cases for allusion to Virgil and Lucan that I will make in the coming pages. Now, there are a great number of correspondences between Tacitus' diction and that of these poets.[26] Not every one is a case of allusion, that is, the meaningful evocation of an earlier passage. Several of Virgil's distinctive preferences and innovative uses of words Tacitus took up in a more general way. An example that Syme notes is Tacitus' preference for *infensus* ("hostile") over its more common synonym *infestus*, a preference shared only by Virgil.[27] Further examples are Tacitus' use of *caedes* for the bodies of the slain[28] and *expediam* at the outset of retrospective passages,[29] uses popularized by the poet.

The principal determining factor in my arguments for allusion will be context, that is, whether the context of the correspondence in Virgil or Lucan bears any meaning for the Tacitean passage I am considering.[30]

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[26] The seminal study of Schmaus (1887) posited nearly 500 Virgilian correspondences across Tacitus' works. Most of the correspondences that I discuss here were noted by Schmaus and then by later scholars. Baxter's (1971) important work pared Schmaus' number down to 300 correspondences "of a fairly certain nature" (93). See also the list in Zaffagno (1990) and the discussions by Miller (1961–1962) 25–28, Henry (1991), and Woodman (2009b) 1–7, who addresses how some instances of correspondence may be mere "stylistic enhancement" (7), the position Goodyear (1972–1981) takes for most Virgilian correspondences in *Ann.* 1–2. Fletcher (1964) also frequently expresses caution. Like Schmaus for Virgil, Robbert (1917) did helpful compiling of many Lucanian correspondences in Tacitus. More recent discussions of Tacitus' allusion to Lucan include O'Gorman (1995) and Tzounakas (2005). And on his engagement with both authors, see the assortment of exemplary passages discussed in Italian by Lauletta (1998) esp. 249–314, and in French by Foucher (2000), esp. 84–113, 305–320, and 412–421. Hellegouarc'h (1991) 2428–2437 provides a review of scholarship on Tacitus and epic. Joseph (2012a) is a recent introductory discussion.

[27] Syme (1958) 727. *TLL* s.v. *infestus* provides a table: Tacitus uses forms of *infestus* 30 times and forms of *infensus* 71 times. For Virgil the numbers are 8 for *infestus* and 10 for *infensus*. Cicero, Sallust, Livy, and Seneca all greatly prefer *infestus* to *infensus*.

[28] At *Hist.* 3.29.2, 3.70.2, 4.1.1, and *Ann.* 6.24.2. Virgil uses the word in this way at *Aen.* 10.245, 11.207, 11.634, and 11.729. Silius Italicus and Statius also follow Virgil's practice, using *caedes* in this way ten and six times, respectively. No author prior to Virgil uses the word in such a way; his near-contemporary Livy does so once, at 8.39.1.

[29] At *Hist.* 1.51.1, 4.12.1, and 4.48.1, as well as *Ger.* 27.2 and *Ann.* 4.1.1. Miller (1987) 97 (followed by Damon (2003) ad loc.) compares in particular Tacitus' *nunc ... expediam* at *Hist.* 1.51.1 with Virgil's use of this pair at *Aen.* 6.756–759, 7.37–40, 11.314–315, and *Geo.* 4.149–150. See also Horsfall (2000) on *Aen.* 7.40 on Virgil's and Lucretius' use of this verb.

[30] See the sensible words of Ash (1997) on allusion in Tacitus: "One useful criterion for assessing the credibility of a possible allusion is relevance. If the echo fails to add interesting layers of meaning to the text under consideration, then there is limited mileage in asserting

Furthermore, the context within the narrative of the *Histories* will be relevant. Walker accurately observed that "the style of the *Histories* is very evenly controlled, though it is related to context."[31] This is certainly the case with Tacitus' allusions to epic in this work. As we shall see, the allusions are to a great extent clustered together, at high points in the narrative of the civil wars: at Galba's death scene in Book 1, the Battles of Cremona in Books 2 and 3, Otho's suicide in Book 2, and the fighting at Rome in Book 3.[32] The allusions complement and compound one another within their clusters; on top of this, many of the clusters correspond with and extend the allusive dynamics of other clusters. Tacitus' practice of clustering allusions to epic authors in the *Histories* is closely in keeping with the prescriptions of Lucian in his treatise *How to Write History*, written about sixty years after the *Histories*.[33] Lucian encourages the historian to "let his mind have a touch and share of poetry, since that too is lofty and sublime, especially when he is treating battle arrays, with land and sea fights .... Let his diction nevertheless keep its feet on the ground, rising with the beauty and greatness of his subjects and as far as possible resembling them, but without becoming more unfamiliar or carried away than the occasion warrants."[34]

Another chief criterion in making these arguments will be the peculiarity of the Tacitean expression. Alongside the tools of lexicography,[35] an important means of gauging Tacitus' inventiveness in his account of the events of 68–70 CE is comparison with the accounts by his near-contemporaries

a connection between two passages in different authors." And see the nuanced discussions by Woodman (1997) 97–102 (with examples of allusion to Cicero, Sallust, and Livy) and O'Gorman (2009).

31 Walker (1976) 116. See also the remarks by Damon (2003) 188 on the "highly stylized" chapters at *Hist.* 1.44–50, and Kraus (2005) 244 on how Latin historians calibrate style to fit given passages.

32 Baxter (1971) 107 makes a similar point about the clustering of allusions to Virgil in the climactic scenes in *Hist.* 3. Santoro L'Hoir (2006) argues for such clustering of tragic language in the *Ann.*

33 Lucian wrote the work in 166 CE, during the Parthian War waged by Lucius Verus (*Hist. conscr.* 2). See further Jones (1986) 59–60.

34 *Hist. conscr.* 45. The translation is adapted from that of Kilburn (1959). At *Hist. conscr.* 22 Lucian is critical of the indecorous mixture of poetic and prosaic phraseology. See further Wiseman (1979) 146–147 on Lucian's appreciation for elements of the poetic in historical writing.

35 In determining word frequency I have employed Gerber and Greef (1903), as well as the concordances of Blackman and Betts (1986) for Tacitus, Warwick (1975) for Virgil, and Deferrari, Fanning, and Sullivan (1940) for Lucan. I have also consulted the *TLL* and employed the Diogenes (searching the Latin corpus as set by the Packard Humanities Institute) and Brepolis word-search programs.

Plutarch (in his *Galba* and *Otho*) and Suetonius (in his *Galba, Otho, Vitellius,* and *Vespasian*), and Cassius Dio (in the fragments and epitomes of Books 64–66 of his *Roman History*, written in the early third century). The four authors share a common source, as the many correspondences in their accounts demonstrate.[36] It is Tacitus' divergences from this parallel tradition, in his variations on particular phrases or images, and also in his distinctive developments of entire episodes, that will interest us most. At times I will also consider the remarks made about the civil wars by Josephus in his *Bellum Judaicum*, which was published in the latter years of Vespasian's reign.

In a passage on the value of poetic vocabulary in prose, the grammarian Demetrius praises Thucydides for how he "uses [a borrowing] in his own way, and makes it his own" (ἰδίως αὐτῷ χρώμενος ἴδιον τὸ ληφθὲν ποιεῖ).[37] Tacitus' habit of altering Virgilian phrases in his adaptation of them has been noted,[38] but his method is not alteration for the sake of alteration. As we saw in the example in *Histories* 3.28 and shall see again and again, in his allusions to Virgil and Lucan Tacitus is consistently building upon and striving to outdo his models' passages.

Tacitus' manner of innovative, emulative allusion to both poets is seen, significantly, right at the outset of the *Histories*, in 1.2, a passage on which I will concentrate in Chapter 1, "History as Epic." In this chapter I also address the structural strategies of opening (in particular his launch *in medias res* and his catalogue of combatants) that complement and compound Tacitus' presentation of his wars as the emulative sequel to Virgil's and Lucan's, in that they magnify even further the spread and scope of the wars. Later in Chapter 1 I turn to two other passages important for laying out the *Histories*' repetitive program: 1.50, where Tacitus fashions a group of nameless Romans who discuss civil wars past and present, and who see and understand civil war's repetitiveness; and 2.37–38, which I read as a thematically

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36 On the *Histories*' place in the parallel tradition, see Martin (1981) 189–196; Damon (2003) 24–30, 291–302, and 304–306; and Ash (2007a) 29–32. See also Syme (1958) 190 on Tacitus' stylistic independence from the shared source.

37 *Eloc.* 113. See also the remarks by Horace at *AP* 131–134, with Brink (1963–1982) ad loc., and Seneca at *Ep.* 79.6. Russell (1979) is a comprehensive treatment of ancient discussions of *imitatio*.

38 By Syme (1958) 357–358 and Baxter (1971) 98. Syme suggests that the alteration is for the sake of avoiding metrical rhythm. On Tacitus' use of hexametrical rhythms, see the discussions of *Ann.* 1.1.1 by Shotter (1968) 288, Leeman (1973) 192, Henry (1991) 3003, Lauletta (1998) 96–101, and Schubert (2006) (*pace* Syme and Goodyear (1972) ad loc.), as well as my discussion of *Hist.* 3.33.2 (*uacuas domos et inania templa*) in Chapter 3.

significant "proem in the middle." In this passage Tacitus holds up divine anger and human madness as causative forces in his civil wars. Over the remainder of Chapter 1 I discuss his use of these forces in the *Histories*, and compare it with the methods of Virgil and especially Lucan in their wars.

In Chapter 2, "The Deaths of Galba and the Desecration of Rome," I look at the emperor Galba's murder in the heart of Rome in Book 1, the first major event in the *Histories*. I discuss the cluster of allusions to the *Aeneid* in this passage, with a focus on the evocation of Virgil's Priam; I also consider how here Tacitus may creatively graft allusions to Lucan, Livy, and Sallust with the Virgilian ones. I then examine how the historian revisits and repeats Galba's Priam-like death over the course of Books 1–3. The most significant case of this repetition is in the fighting on and around the Capitol that is narrated in Book 3's final chapters, where again expansive allusions to the *Aeneid* are clustered.

Another, related strand of repetition runs through Tacitus' presentation of "The Battles of Cremona," my title for Chapter 3. I begin this chapter by exploring Tacitus intratextual repetitive program in his narration of the First and Second Battles of Cremona in Books 2 and 3. Then I argue that he gives the repetitiveness at Cremona even deeper roots by presenting the fighting and bloodshed there (especially at Cremona II) as a degenerative repetition of the fighting at some of Virgil's and Lucan's (already repetitive) battles.

In the concluding Chapter 4, "Otho's Exemplary Response," I discuss how Tacitus makes Otho's suicide and final words, which he narrates at 2.46–49, stand as a corrective, exemplary response to the repetitiveness of the surrounding narrative. Significantly, Tacitus clusters into these chapters another set of allusions to the *Aeneid*, which, I suggest, are themselves corrective of Virgilian heroism.

As I mentioned above, I have added to the core argument of this study a substantial Epilogue. Unlike in Chapters 1–4, where I consider Tacitus' intertextual engagement with Virgil and Lucan alongside the complementary intratextual repetitions that he works into *Histories* 1–3, here my focus is exclusively intratextual. In the Epilogue, titled "Savage Even in its Peace," I look at the historian's extension of the theme of repetitive civil war beyond December 69 CE (when Vespasian's cause emerged victorious) and beyond the terminus of Book 3. The theme continues to be repeated and grow in the immediate post-war narrative of Book 4—and, I propose, beyond, into his narrative of the "savage peace" (1.2.1) of the Flavians.

Tacitus' Readers

Since my focus to this point in the Introduction has fallen almost exclusively on Tacitus' self-presentation, it is fitting to make a few basic observations here about his readership and their expectations, and about the types of response that the inter- and intratextual program I have proposed here might have elicited from them.

First of all, it must be noted that élite Romans of Tacitus' time were steeped in the poetry of Virgil—by then established as the classic of Rome—and were certainly also well exposed to the popular poetry of Lucan. Tacitus' own explicit words about Virgil and Lucan in the *Dialogus* (to be addressed below), and about Lucan in the *Annals*, speak to their fame in the first century.[39] And, as Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* more than any other work demonstrates, the education of élite Romans such as Tacitus and the peers who read him instilled in them close familiarity with, most of all, Virgil, but also Lucan.[40] And it is not just testimony from the Roman classroom, but also of course the literature of the first and second centuries, and even the walls of Pompeii, that speak of Virgil's vast fame and influence.[41] Though not granted immortality by the Bay of Naples' finest graffitists, Lucan's literary fame was swift and pervasive as well.[42]

In the manifesto on the aims of his writing at *Annals* 4.32–33 (a passage whose strategy of *recusatio* I shall discuss below in this Introduction), Tacitus writes of the importance of providing enjoyment (*oblectatio*, 4.33.3) for

39 At *Ann.* 15.49.3 he writes of Nero's envy of Lucan's poetic fame: *Lucanum propriae causae accendebant, quod famam carminum eius premebat Nero prohibueratque ostentare, uanus adsimilatione.*

40 See esp. Quint. 1.8.4–6 and 10.1.85–86 on Virgil, and 10.1.90 on Lucan.

41 For a collection of testimonia of Virgil's celebrity from his time and the two subsequent centuries, see Ziolkowski and Putnam (2008) 1–70. And see the discussions by Tarrant (1997) and Syed (2005) 13–19, with a full bibliography at 230–231, notes 1–27. Particular to Tacitus and Virgil, see Baxter (1971) 93–94, who concludes at 94: "by the first century AD knowledge of Virgil among the Roman literary public was both thorough and widespread. This is important, for it not only indicates that Tacitus knew his Virgil well—and his frequent use of Virgil proves this—but also that the audience for whom he wrote must have known Virgil's works equally well. Tacitus could therefore expect his public to be aware of and to recall specific Virgilian passages he assimilated into his works." See also Lauletta (1998) 339–345 on Tacitus' ideal, educated reader.

42 See Conte (1994) 449–450 on Lucan's "enormous popularity in antiquity" (450), as well as Bartsch (2005) 494. Of ancient testimonia, see especially Statius' birthday memorial to Lucan (*Silv.* 2.7), Martial's report of the bybliopola who had success selling his poems (14.194), and the notice in the short Suetonian *Vita* of Lucan that his poems were read aloud by grammarians and sold by both discerning and tasteless booksellers.

the reader, and that "it is the localities of peoples, the vicissitudes of battles, and the distinguished deaths of leaders that retain and reinvigorate the minds of readers" (4.33.3: *situs gentium, uarietates proeliorum, clari ducum exitus retinent ac redintegrant legentium animum*).[43] For the readers of the *Histories* who knew their Virgil and their Lucan, the process of identifying the allusions and expansions of these poets' wars—and, indeed, of considering the *uarietates* between and among them—was, to be sure, a source of enjoyment and reinvigoration.[44]

Just above in this same passage from *Annals* 4, Tacitus had stated:

> sic conuerso statu neque alia re Rom⟨ana⟩ quam si unus imperitet,[45] haec conquiri tradique in rem fuerit, quia pauci prudentia honesta ab deterioribus, utilia ab noxiis discernunt, plures aliorum euentis docentur. (*Ann.* 4.33.2)
>
> So, with the order of things turned around, and with the Roman state nothing other than the realm of one ruler, it will be useful for these affairs to be collected and handed down. For few men have the discretion to distinguish honorable things from worse things, and the useful from the harmful; more are taught by the happenings of others.

So Tacitus was writing to entertain his readers (so 4.33.3), but also to teach them. This agenda, it merits noting, matches almost precisely not only what Cicero expected from historians (*Fin.* 5.51: *nec uero sum nescius esse utilitatem in historia, non modo uoluptatem*—"Indeed I am not unaware that there is utility in historiography, not only pleasure"), but also what Horace expected from poets (*AP* 333–334: *aut prodesse uolunt aut delectare poetae* | *aut simul et iucunda et idonea dicere uitae*—"Poets wish either to be of use or to entertain, or to say things that are at the same time enjoyable and suitable to one's life").[46]

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43 On the significance of these lines for Tacitus' writing, see Woodman (1988) 183–184, Martin and Woodman (1989) ad loc., and Ash (2010b), esp. 141–143. And see notes 78–79 and 86 in this Introduction for further bibliography on *Ann.* 4.32–33.

44 See further Rutledge (1998) 143–144, who, discussing the suspicious reader of parallels between the text and the present whom Tacitus imagines at *Ann.* 4.33.4, concludes that "a Roman audience suffered from what one might term 'parallel-mania'—an almost ineluctable inclination to draw parallels between the past and present" (144). In support of this statement Rutledge notes (at 155 n. 15) the historical comparisons made by characters at *Ann.* 1.9–10, 2.41.5, and 2.73.2–3.

45 Here Martin and Woodman (1989) print: *neque alia rerum ⟨salute⟩ quam si unus imperitet*. The resultant translation (p. 174) is: "and there being no other salvation for the state than if one man should rule."

46 These and other ancient comparanda are discussed by Martin and Woodman (1989) on *Ann.* 4.33.3. Horace builds on his sentiment at *AP* 333–334 at 343–344. On this passage and its theoretical precedents, see Brink (1963–1982) on 333–346. See too Foucher's (2000) 57–71 discussion of the instructive aims of poet and historian alike.

As the statement at *Annals* 4.33.2 indicates, Tacitus' particular instructive aim was for his readers to learn from his narrative what was honorable and what less so, what useful and what harmful, under the new state of the principate.[47] In the table of contents to the *Histories* (1.2–3), a passage to which I shall turn time and again,[48] Tacitus marks his entire narrative as a source of *exempla*, or lessons, for his contemporary audience. At 1.3.1 he states: "The age was not, nevertheless, so barren of virtues that it did not also produce good examples" (*non tamen adeo uirtutum sterile saeculum, ut non et bona exempla prodiderit*).[49] Mention of loyal mothers, wives, relatives, and slaves follows, as well as reference to the laudable deaths that are to come. But the list of *bona exempla* is abruptly cut off by notice of the ominous portents from these times, and, at the close of the table of contents, warning of the era's unprecedented acts of divine punishment (1.3.2). And what precedes Tacitus' statement at 1.3.1—what necessitates the pointed *tamen* ("nevertheless")—is his vastly longer list of *mala exempla*.[50] These are not just the faithless slaves, freedmen, and friends mentioned in the previous sentence (1.2.3), but all of the contents—the wars, murders, disasters, and other atrocities—outlined in 1.2. In this passage Tacitus employs a metaphor of fertility not only in 1.3.1 (note *sterile* and *prodiderit*), where his exemplary agenda is explicit, but also in the table of contents' opening words: *opus adgredior opimum casibus* ("I approach a work abounding

[47] On Tacitus as a senatorial historian, with a politically interested and active readership, see Momigliano (1980) 371–372, Martin (1981) 24–25, Luce (1991), esp. 2914, Rutledge (1998), and Sinclair (1995) 37–40 and 59–66, who writes at 38: "Tacitus does not want his public to have a merely contemplative approach to history, but demands that it read his *Annales* as a means to enhance its own social and political acumen as well."

[48] I print the entirety of 1.2.1–2 at the opening of Chapter 1, my most extended treatment of the passage.

[49] On Tacitus' use of *exempla*, see the discussions by Goodyear (1972) 34–37, Aubrion (1985) 237–246, Martin and Woodman (1989) on *Ann.* 4.28.1 and 4.33.2–3, Davies (2004) 145–146, Turpin (2008), and Ash (2009) 93–95. On the significance of *Hist.* 1.3.1 in particular for the announcement of Tacitus' exemplary program, see Roberts (1936) 15, Herkommer (1968) 132, Goodyear (1972) 27 n. 2 and 34, Aubrion (1985) 237–238, and Turpin (2008) 393–394. These exemplary aims are in keeping with those of his historiographical predecessors. See the statements by Sempronius Asellio, fr. 2 (= Gellius 5.18.9), Sallust, *Jug.* 4.1–6, and Livy, *Praef.* 10 on the instructive and cautionary functions of Latin historiography. Chaplin (2000) 16–31 traces the development of the use of *exempla* by historians of Rome. And on the vast issue of exemplarity in Roman literature and culture, see, for starters, Litchfield (1914), Hölkeskamp (1996), Chaplin (2000) 11–16, and Roller (2004 and 2009). For a different view from the one presented here, see Syme (1958) 520–521, who is skeptical of any consistent moral purpose to Tacitus' writing.

[50] On the deliberate imbalance see Damon (2003) ad loc. and Keitel (2010) 345.

in disasters," 1.2.1).[51] This gesture seems to link the two statements, and to underscore the point that all of his narrative is productive of *exempla*, both those that are "good" and worthy of imitation and, much more often, those that are "bad" and cautionary.

From the events of the *Histories* and in particular from the inter- and intratextual repetitions that, I argue here, pervade and in many ways come to define these events, Tacitus' readers surely had much to learn. The tumult of 68–69 that he narrates in Books 1–3 was some forty years in the past for them, but the events of the years 89 (Saturninus' revolt) and 96–98 (Trajan's own "coup" of sorts) demonstrated again just how easily the chaos and violence of 68–69 could have been and could be repeated, just how fragile the new *status rerum* was.[52] And the civil-war-like atmosphere of Domitian's reign, especially his final years 93–96, was of course fresh in his readers' minds. As the Virgilian and Lucanian intertexts and repetitive Tacitean intratexts that I will study here hammer home, Roman self-destructiveness had a chilling way of repeating itself. Such patterns were not, however, inevitable: if reading with a willingness to be taught (recall *Ann.* 4.33.2), Tacitus' audience of political élites (even, perhaps, emperors[53]) could learn from the past, and, perhaps, avoid relapse and further repetition.

In my treatment of certain passages I shall discuss at greater length the matter of the Roman reader's "takeaways" from the inter- and intratextual reading of the *Histories* that I am suggesting. But such questions about readers' responses—their enjoyment of the *Histories*' thrilling, multi-layered narrative, and its relevance to their political reality—should not stand too far out of mind as we make our way through the arguments of the coming pages.

The choice of the *Histories* as the subject of this study reflects my impression that it is in his presentation of civil war in this work that Tacitus "succeeds" Virgil and Lucan most pervasively and systematically. This is certainly not

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51 Woodman (1988) 191 n. 3 and Damon (2003) on 1.2.1 discuss Tacitus' use of an agricultural metaphor to connect the statements in 1.2.1 and 1.3.1, as well as 1.1.4, where he writes of the *uberiorem securioremque materiam* provided by the reigns of Nerva and Trajan. Damon (2003) on 1.2.1 offers a successful defense of the emendation to *opimum* from *opibus*, which appears in the earliest surviving manuscript of the *Hist.* (M).

52 I discuss Saturninus' revolt and Trajan's rise at greater length in the Epilogue.

53 Turpin (2008) 399 considers the possibility of emperors among Tacitus' intended readership: "Emperors were the most obvious people to learn from Tacitus' explorations of the imperial character, to be inspired or deterred by the thought that historians were there to preserve their memory. But Tacitus is certainly not explicit about this."

to say that he does not build upon Virgilian and Lucanian language and imagery in his other works.[54] As a way of further introduction before turning in Chapter 1 to the opening of the *Histories*, over the remainder of this Introduction I will look closely at a few particularly revealing passages elsewhere in Tacitus' corpus in which he assuredly presents himself as an "epic successor." As we shall see, in the work that immediately precedes the *Histories*, the *Dialogus de Oratoribus*, and then in two programmatic passages in the later *Annals* (3.55.5 and, again, 4.32–33), he establishes in quite clear ways the nature of his succession of Virgil, the "torchbearer" of Roman epic and, indeed, the epic poet whom he emulates most consistently.

Lucan's Death and Afterlife in Ann. *15.70*

But before addressing those passages in which engagement with Virgil is held up, I will consider in brief the death-scene that Tacitus crafts for Lucan in *Annals* 15.70, and what it may reveal about Tacitus' embrace of that poet.[55] The picture painted in *Annals* 15 of Lucan's part in the Pisonian conspiracy is not a flattering one. Like Suetonius in his short *Vita* of Lucan, Tacitus has Lucan betray his fellow conspirators (15.58.1), and even implicate his own mother when under interrogation (15.56.4). To Lucan the political actor, then, Tacitus offers only reprehension. But to Lucan the poet Tacitus gives a death-scene worthy of an epic hero (15.70.1):

> exim Annaei Lucani caedem imperat. is profluente sanguine ubi frigescere pedes manusque et paulatim ab extremis cedere spiritum feruido adhuc et compote mentis pectore intellegit, recordatus carmen a se compositum, quo uolneratum militem per eius modi mortis imaginem obisse tradiderat, uersus ipsos rettulit, eaque illi suprema uox fuit.
>
> Then [Nero] orders the death of Annaeus Lucanus. As his blood flowed out, and as he realized that his feet and hands were growing cold and that little by

[54] See (along with the citations in notes 17 and 26 above) e.g. Putnam (1989), Nickbakht (2006), and Joseph (2008) on Virgil's influence on the opening chapters of the *Ann.*, and Edelmaier (1964) 134–139, Baxter (1972), Bews (1972–1973) 37–40, Von Albrecht (1997) 1111, and Foucher (2000) 98–105 for the argument that Tacitus presents Germanicus in *Ann.* 1–2 as another Aeneas. And see Goodyear (1972–1981) ad loc. and Pelling (1997) 207 for discussions of the allusion to *BC* 7.26 at *Ann.* 1.65.2.

[55] See also O'Gorman (2000) 157–159 on this scene, and for the suggestion that with the phrase *mortis imaginem* here Tacitus alludes to both *Aen.* 2.369 and *Hist.* 3.28 (which I discuss at the outset of this Introduction). Woodman (1993) 117 also discusses the possible Virgilian allusion here.

> little his spirit was departing from his extremities, with his breast still warm and in control of his mind, he recalled a song he had composed in which he had told of a wounded soldier meeting a death of this same kind, and performed the verses verbatim, and this was his last utterance.

The poet's death is told in slow motion: his hands and feet give in first, the spirit only slowly (*paulatim*) receding, while he remains compos mentis long enough for one final recitation. And by making *uox* the penultimate word of the account, Tacitus leaves the impression that Lucan's voice was the last thing to go.[56] And in a way his voice is made to live longer, and eternally, through its memorialization here by Tacitus. Moreover, there is a certain kind of authorial mirroring taking place in the passage: Tacitus hands down the story of Lucan's death, in which the poet himself is handing down the story of very similar (*eius modi*) death.[57] The historian thus emerges quite manifestly as a continuator of what Lucan did. Moreover, this type of highly detailed, "slow-motion" image is a hallmark of Lucan's style, and, as I shall suggest in this study, one that Tacitus appears to build upon in various passages of the *Histories*.

Maternus and Virgil in the Dialogus

As we shall see, Lucan also appears in the *Dialogus*, briefly though meaningfully. But it is the embrace of Virgil in this work that is most informative. The *Dialogus* is a programmatic work, highly revealing of the directions Tacitus will take in the historical writing that follows right after it.[58] Here he declares much about himself, as a political thinker and as a stylist. So it is significant that in the *Dialogus* Tacitus demonstrates in clear ways his manner of engagement with Virgil, in particular the clustering of allusions, along with his way of emulatively building upon Virgilian phrases.

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56 We may contrast Tacitus' account with Suetonius' much drier report: *impetrato autem mortis arbitrio libero codicillos ad patrem corrigendis quibusdam uersibus suis exarauit, epulatusque largiter brachia ad secandas uenas praebuit medico*.

57 Fantham (1992) 3 writes that Lucan's performance here was "[p]robably the last words of Vulteius before dying by his own sword," at *BC* 4.516–520. Hunink (1992b) considers several other passages from the *BC* that offer suitable "last words" for Lucan in this passage.

58 In dating the composition of the *Dial.* to after the composition of the *Ag.* and *Ger.*, and immediately prior to that of the *Hist.*, I follow Syme (1958) 111 and 670–673, Brink (1994) (the most thorough treatment of the *Dial.*'s composition date; he assigns the window of 99–103), Birley (2000) 240–241, and Mayer (2001) 22–27. Murgia (1980) and (1985) (to whom Brink (1994) responds) sees the *Dial.* as the first of Tacitus' works.

These tactics are manifest in the first speech by Curiatius Maternus (11–13). With this speech, a response to the criticisms of the previous speaker Marcus Aper, Maternus defends his decision to stop practicing public oratory and focus solely on the composition of poetry. Throughout the speech Maternus contrasts the hectic, dangerous life of the forensic orator with a picture of the peaceful, carefree existence of the poet. He concludes his argument by drawing on and broadening imagery from *Georgics* 2.458–540, Virgil's own opposition of city life and the rustic life of the farmer and poet.[59] I reprint here the conclusion of Maternus' speech (13.5–6). I have put in bold the words and phrases that he appears to have drawn from *Georgics* 2.458–540:

> "**me uero dulces**," ut Vergilius ait, "**Musae**," remotum a sollicitudinibus et curis et necessitate cotidie aliquid contra animum faciendi, in **illa sacra illosque fontis** ferant; nec **insanum** ultra et lubricum **forum** famamque pallentem trepidus experiar. [13.6] non me **fremitus salutantium** nec anhelans libertus excitet, nec incertus futuri testamentum pro pignore scribam, nec plus habeam quam quod possim cui uelim relinquere, quandoque [enim] fatalis et meus dies ueniat; statuarque tumulo non maestus et atrox, sed hilaris et coronatus, et pro memoria mei nec consulat quisquam nec roget.
>
> "But may the sweet Muses," as Virgil says, take me away, removed from disturbances and cares and from the daily obligation to do something that is against my inclination, to those sacred places and those springs; and, furthermore, may I no longer experience in dread the maddening and slippery forum, and the fame that makes you pale. [13.6] And may neither the roar of greeters nor a panting freedman rouse me; and may I not, anxious of the future, have to write a will in order to secure my wealth; and may I not have more than what I am able to leave to the person of my choice, whenever my fated day comes; and may I be placed in the tomb appearing not sad and gloomy, but cheerful and crowned; and may no one [in the senate] resolve or petition on behalf of my memory.

Maternus begins with a quotation of *Georgics* 2.475, the beginning of Virgil's personal wish for retreat, a wish that serves to assimilate the poet with the farmer who was addressed in the preceding lines.[60] For Maternus this

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59 Also noting many of the Virgilian correspondences clustered together here are Güngerich (1980) ad loc., Heilmann (1989) 387 n. 4 and 388 n. 6, Lauletta (1998) 197–198, Mayer (2001) ad loc., and Levene (2004) 165–166.

60 *Geo.* 2.475–477 reads: *me uero primum dulces ante omnia Musae* … [477] *accipiant* ("But as for me, firstly, may the Muses—who are the most sweet of all—receive me"). On the fusion of the poet and farmer here, see Mynors (1990) ad loc., and the discussions by Ryberg (1958) 125 ("the poet of the country and the tiller of the soil become indistinguishable as equal sharers of the good life") and Kronenberg (2000), esp. 349–355.

quotation acts as a "motto," assuring that the listener/reader is mindful of Virgil's passage and the fusion there of the poet and the rustic. In what follows, Maternus' impassioned progression of subjunctives of wish (*ferant, experiar, excitet, scribam, habeam, statuar, consulat, roget*) echoes the series of hopeful subjunctives in Virgil's wish.[61] Maternus' wish to be carried away "to those sacred places" (*in illa sacra*) recalls in particular Virgil's inclusion of the "sacred rites of the gods" (*sacra deum*, 2.473) among the hallmarks of rustic life, and his reference to his own performance of the sacred rites of the Muses (*Musae* | *quarum sacra fero*, 2.475–476).[62] And Maternus' pining in the same line for "those springs" (*illos fontis*) is reminiscent of similar aspirations from Virgil at 2.485 and 2.486.[63]

Maternus moves on to define his idyllic retreat negatively, by what is missing from it, just as in the *Georgics* passage. And here Maternus builds upon and strengthens Virgil's memorable images. Virgil had celebrated the absence of the "maddening forum" (*insanumque forum*, 2.501) from the rustic's life. Maternus seizes on Virgil's medical metaphor and, with the addition of the modifier *lubricum* ("slippery"), casts the forum as a place hazardous to physical as well as mental stability. He then extends the metaphor of illness by describing the fame that accompanies success in the forum as something that makes one pale (*famamque pallentem*).[64] In the next sentence Maternus' wish not to be roused by the "roar of greeters" (*fremitus salutantium*) picks up Virgil's exclusion from the country life of the "wave of greeters" (*salutantum ... undam*, 2.462) that a mansion pours out in the morning. *Fremo* and its derivatives are commonly used of the "roar" of

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61 *Geo*. 2.477: *accipiant* and *monstrent*; 2.485: *placeant*; 2.486: *amem*; 2.489: *sistat* and *protegat*.

62 Mynors (1990) on 2.476 notes Tacitus' adaptation of Virgil's use of *sacra* here, and discusses the popularity of the motif of the poetic *sacerdos* after the publication of the *Geo*., seen at e.g. Horace, *Carm*. 3.1.3 and Propertius, 3.1.3.

63 *Geo*. 2.485: *rigui placeant in uallibus amnes*; 2.486: *flumina amem siluasque*.

64 I follow Winterbottom (1975) in reading *pallentem* here. The manuscript tradition has *palantem* vel sim. Bötticher (which I have not seen), followed by Mayer (2001), proposed *fallacem*. For *pallens* of "things which cause paleness," see *OLD* 1c, listing this passage, along with Tib. 1.8.17, Ovid, *Ars*. 2.105, and Persius 5.15 and 5.55. Virgil includes *pallentes ... Morbi* in his underworld at *Aen*. 6.275, a use that may (*contra OLD*) parallel Tacitus' use in our passage. The image of *famam pallentem* may have had particularly strong resonances for those readers who recalled, with Tacitus, the paranoid Domitian's manner of "taking note of the pale faces of so many men" (*denotandis tot hominum palloribus*, *Agr*. 45.2). I return to this passage in the *Agr*. when considering Tacitus' depiction of Domitian in the *Hist*. in my Epilogue. On Tacitus' use of medical metaphors, see Woodman (2010) 43–47, and my discussion of *Hist*. 1.4.1 in Chapter 1.

waves.[65] So here Maternus literally echoes, but also sonically expands upon, the wave metaphor used by Virgil.

We see that Maternus' opposition of the poet's country retreat and the orator's hazardous city life gains force from, and builds upon, the imagery in Virgil's passage—and in this gesture Tacitus demonstrates his own deftness at the constructive adaptation of Virgil. Now, Maternus' conception here of a safe, carefree poetic escape is a patent fantasy, and at odds with the defiant Maternus who embraces his politically dangerous poetry elsewhere in the dialogue.[66] This whole speech, then, may in fact serve as an ironic comment on the *impossibility* of poetic retreat and freedom under the empire. What is more, the passage in the *Georgics* with which Maternus engages so closely is itself rife with ironies about the rustic's life, which—the rest of the poem demonstrates—is *not* carefree and easy.[67] Might Maternus, and thus Tacitus, be reading the ironies of Virgil's passage into his own? Is he building upon Virgil in this way too?

After Maternus finishes his speech, Vipstanus Messala arrives late to the gathering, and Julius Secundus summarizes for him what he has missed. Of Maternus' speech he says: "Maternus' speech in defense of his verses was rich and, as was appropriate for a defense of poets, was rather bold and more like the work of poets than of orators" (14.2: *Materni pro carminibus suis laeta, utque poetas defendi decebat, audentior et poetarum quam oratorum similior oratio*). So Tacitus has an audience member within the text hear Maternus' speech not just as "more like the work of poets," but as *audentior*—that is, bold or *innovative*. This is the sense that *audeo* and its derivatives take on in discussions of literary efforts, and the term is perfect for describing how Maternus—and so Tacitus—reads, interprets, adapts, and

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65 See *OLD* 1a, with reference to *Geo.* 2.160 and *Aen.* 11.299, on which Servius writes: *antiqui aquae sonitus 'fremitus' dicebant*. The more common expression for a group of *salutantes* (and one that does not create the visual and aural effect of *salutantum unda* and *fremitus salutantium*) is *turba salutantium*, seen at Sen., *Ep.* 19.11.3; Suet., *Galba* 17.1.5, Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* 3.14.3; and Tac., *Ann.* 4.41.2. Tacitus most often uses *coetus salutantium*, at *Ann.* 11.22.1, 13.18.3, and 14.56.3.

66 See esp. *Dial.* 2–3, with Martin (1981) 65, Luce (1993) 23–24, and Bartsch (1994) 119. Bringmann (1970) 175 suggests that Maternus' unrealistic speech and his effusive words about the principate at 41.1–3 add up to offer ironical commentary on the oppressive realities of the principate. See also Syme (1958) 110–111, Cameron (1967), Williams (1978) 34, and Luce (1993) 24 for the suggestion that the historical Curiatius Maternus' politically provocative poetry led to his death soon after the dramatic date of the *Dial.*

67 On the many contradictions in *Geo.* 2.458–540, see Ross (1987) 122–128, Thomas (1988) ad loc., and Perkell (2002) 18–27, esp. 23–26. With less emphasis but still aware of the contradictions is Mynors (1990) on 2.458–460.

builds upon Virgil at *Dialogus* 13.5–6.[68] This sort of innovative, constructive reading of a vital passage in Virgil is precisely what Tacitus will do persistently, on a grand scale, in the *Histories*.

Shortly afterwards in the *Dialogus* Tacitus includes an explicit statement about poetic allusion. During his second speech, a defense of contemporary oratory, Aper states: *exigitur enim iam ab oratore etiam poeticus decor, non Acci aut Pacuui ueterno inquinatus sed ex Horati et Vergili et Lucani sacrario prolatus* (20.5: "For now poetic beauty too is demanded from the orator, not the kind that is soiled by the old rust of Accius and Pacuvius, but that which is drawn forward from the shrine of Horace, Virgil, and Lucan"). Aper is speaking of the orator's methods, but his words apply to Tacitus' own manner of working as well.[69] Like the speech of Maternus, these words from Aper are programmatic: he is encouraging in theory what Maternus does with great dexterity in practice. And with the placement of the poetry of Horace, Virgil, and Lucan—already a "new classic" just some ten years after his death[70]—into a "shrine" (*sacrarium*), Aper in fact may be nodding to the allusive journey "to those sacred places" (*in illa sacra*, 13.5) that Maternus took in his speech. The verb Aper employs here for the allusive act is also significant: *prolatus* indicates that one should not just draw from the poets, but carry the allusion *forward*, that is, innovate in the act.[71]

A Virgilian Stylistic Program: Ann. *3.55.5 and 4.32.2*

Maternus' allusive, innovative engagement with Virgil in the *Dialogus*, then, prepares us for how Tacitus will operate in his next work, the *Histories*. The

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68 Brink (1963–1982) on Horace, *AP* 9–10 writes of *audendi* there as "a term often denoting ventures in style" and lists other passages in which *audeo* is used in such a way, including Quint. 1.5.71–72 and 8.3.35. See also *TLL* 2.1243.8 ff. for *audacia* in literary contexts, 2.1248.2 ff. for *audax*, and 2.1256.22 ff. for *audeo*. On Secundus' use of *audentior* at *Dial.* 14.2 Mayer (2001) ad loc. writes: "Poets particularly referred to their boldness in tackling certain themes, so again his word has been carefully chosen."

Brady (1874) 233 and Foucher (2000) 89–90 also consider the poetic declaration that Tacitus may offer in the *Dial.*, though without treatment of the allusive program at 13.5–6. Bardon (1946) 214, Löfstedt (1958) 153, and Barnes (1986) 232–233 speculate about whether Tacitus actually tried his hand at poetry.

69 See also Lauletta (1998) 192 and Foucher (2000) 90 on the programmatic importance of *Dial.* 20.5 for Tacitus' historical writing.

70 Lucan's forced suicide is in 65; the dramatic date of the *Dial.* is 74 or 75 (see 17.3, with Syme (1958) 670–671).

71 See *OLD* 3b for *profero* as "to bring (a new invention, etc.) into the world," and esp. Horace, *AP* 58, with Brink (1963–1982) ad loc.

special place of Virgil among Tacitus' literary predecessors is also held up in the later *Annals*, in two of that work's most conspicuous programmatic passages.

The first of these is *Annals* 3.55.5. After a long digression on changes in Roman luxuriousness at the table (3.55.1–5), Tacitus states, in a sort of addendum to the digression:

> nec omnia apud priores meliora, sed nostra quoque aetas multa **laudis et artium** imitanda posteris tulit. uerum haec nobis ⟨in⟩ maiores certamina ex honesto maneant.
>
> And not everything was better among our predecessors, but our age too has offered much glory in the arts, which should be imitated by posterity. Whether or not this happens, may these competitions of ours against our ancestors continue in an honorable way.

After writing in the digression about Rome's recent turn away from excessive luxuriousness, Tacitus passes via the words *nec omnia apud priores meliora* to speak about his own literary project, his own endeavor in the arts. He is positioning his[72] work in the literary tradition, to be imitated by later writers, and to compete with earlier ones. It is a competition that he confidently embraces.

At the heart of Tacitus' claims here about his place in the tradition is an allusion to the *Georgics*.[73] With the hendiadys *laudis et artium* ("glory in the arts") Tacitus calls to mind the programmatic passage at *Georgics* 2.173–176:

> salue, magna parens frugum, Saturnia tellus,
> magna uirum: tibi **res antiquae laudis et artem**
> ingredior sanctos ausus recludere fontis,
> Ascraeumque cano Romana per oppida carmen.
>
> Hail, great mother of crops, Saturnian land, great mother of men! For you I undertake this subject and craft of ancient glory, and am daring to open up these sacred springs, and sing an Ascraean song through Roman towns.

With these lines, the concluding lines of Virgil's prominent digression on Italy's glories (2.136–176), the poet writes of his place in the Hesiodic and Alexandrian literary traditions.[74] And here he calls attention to the

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72 Woodman and Martin (1996) 410: "*nostra* … suggests an authorial plural, 'my' age." They cite *OLD* 2b for *noster* as "my," as well as Tacitus' use of the first person plural at *Ann.* 4.32.1–2, a passage I discuss below.

73 As Syme (1958) 339 n. 2 noted, followed by Woodman and Martin (1996) 409.

74 Hesiod lived in the Boeotian town Ascra, and it was the Alexandrians who first applied the epithet Ἀσκραῖος to Hesiod (Thomas (1988) on 2.176).

praiseworthiness of not just his material (*res*) but his style (*artem*) too.[75] As we have seen, Tacitus is making very similar claims at *Annals* 3.55.5. Where Virgil nodded to his literary relationships with Hesiod and the Alexandrians, Tacitus, with the close adaptation of Virgil's phrase,[76] in this unmistakably programmatic passage, appears to be holding up a relationship with Virgil. And, following after Virgil, Tacitus celebrates specifically the skills / craft / style (*artium*) of his work.

A second, complementary allusion to the *Georgics* comes amid the important digression from his Tiberian narrative at *Annals* 4.32–33.[77] Above in this Introduction I discussed how Tacitus uses this digression to articulate his belief that historiography should both instruct and provide enjoyment for its readers (4.33.2–3). Prior to these statements about the aims of his writing, Tacitus opens the digression by discussing his work's content, and compares it with that of his predecessors (4.32.1–2):

> pleraque eorum quae rettuli quaeque referam parua forsitan et leuia memoratu uideri non nescius sum; set nemo annales nostros cum scriptura eorum contenderit qui ueteres populi Romani res composuere. ingentia illi bella, expugnationes urbium, fusos captosque reges, aut si quando ad interna praeuerterent, discordias consulum aduersum tribunos, agrarias frumentariasque leges, plebis et optimatium certamina libero egressu memorabant. **nobis in arto et inglorius labor**: immota quippe aut modice lacessita pax, maestae urbis res et princeps proferendi imperi incuriosus erat.

> That many of the things that I have related and shall relate seem perhaps slight and trivial to recall I am not unaware. But no one should compare my annals with the writing of those who compiled the old affairs of the Roman people. With free rein those men recalled great wars, the sieges of cities, routed and captured kings, or, whenever they turned their attention to internal matters, the discord between consuls and tribunes, agrarian and grain laws, and the struggles between the plebs and the optimates. But my work is meager and inglorious: for peace was unmoved, or only modestly disturbed; the affairs in the city were miserable; and the princeps was uninterested in expanding the empire.

[75] Thomas (1988) on 2.174–175 defends the reading of *artem* over *artis* in 2.174 and writes: "*res* and *ars* are a pair: the theme and the craft involved in expounding it, the subject matter and the style, are praiseworthy."

[76] Woodman and Martin (1996) 409 n. 3 observe that "*laus* and *ars* seem not to be so closely combined elsewhere." In making the case for allusion, they also adduce the fact that both *Ann.* 3.55.5 and *Geo.* 2.174–175 are programmatic passages.

[77] Syme (1958) 339 n. 2 and Woodman and Martin (1996) 409 have suggested that the allusion at 4.32.2 is complementary to the one at 3.55.5, though without further discussion.

Tacitus' anxiety about the apparent triviality of his material, as compared with his predecessors', is clearly disingenuous.[78] The narrative of the *Annals* does indeed have the wars and deaths for which he longs here.[79] Furthermore, as Keitel and Woodman have demonstrated, in the surrounding narrative Tacitus dresses up his domestic events as battles and sieges, and adapts to his own narrative many of the other set-pieces employed by his predecessors.[80] So, by transforming his bland material into the ideal, pleasurable stuff, Tacitus in many ways outstrips those who came before him in this enterprise. On top of all of this, Tacitus explicitly defends his coverage of domestic material that seems "trivial to recall" (*leuia memoratu*, 4.32.1) when he writes in the very next sentence of the digression, at 4.32.2: *non tamen sine usu fuerit introspicere illa primo aspectu leuia, ex quis magnarum saepe rerum motus oriuntur* ("However, it will not have been without benefit to look into those affairs which seem trivial at first glance, but from which the movements of great affairs often arise"). The usefulness of his inquiry into ostensibly trivial events from the principate's early history he goes on to explain at greater length in 4.33.1–2 (see my discussion above in this Introduction).

So the statement at 4.32.2 that "my work is meager and inglorious" (*nobis in arto et inglorius labor*) is a pretense. The assertions here of inferiority in the tradition constitute a *recusatio*, one that, in truth, amounts to a pronouncement of assimilation.[81] Tacitus *will* match up with the predecessors who wrote of battles, sieges, and kings. But by depreciating his material and then proving he is up to the task despite his "inferior" material, Tacitus marks his place in the tradition and in fact his superiority in that tradition.

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78 On Tacitus' disingenuousness here see Goodyear (1972) 31 n. 2 ("a pinch of salt is probably required"), Clarke (2002) esp. 92 n. 31 and 100–101, and Gowing (2009) 20–21. And see Woodman (1988) 180–186 on Tacitus' manipulation of convention here in order to emphasize the uniqueness of his writing.

79 See Levene (2009) 226–237 on the "apparent mismatch between what is claimed in this passage [4.32–33] and the actual texture of the *Annals*" (226), replete with wars, sieges, and the deaths of leaders. Note e.g. the account of the war in Thrace soon after this digression, at *Ann.* 4.46–51.

80 Keitel (1984) and Woodman (1988) 186–190.

81 Clarke (2002) 101, after tracing the extent to which Tacitus' "anti-history" is in fact in many ways traditional, also regards *Ann.* 4.32–33 as a sort of *recusatio*. And in a similar vein Martin and Woodman (1989) on 4.32.1, after listing passages in which ancient historians claim to improve upon their predecessors, write of Tacitus' move here: "T. affects to decline such *aemulatio*." And see the productive discussion of Davis (1991) 11 on *recusatio* as "a rhetorical 'mode of assimilation'—a device by which the speaker disingenuously seeks to *include* material and styles that he ostensibly precludes."

At the heart of this *recusatio* is, again, Virgil. Tacitus' *nobis in arto et inglorius labor* is an adaptation of *Georgics* 4.6.[82] I print here *Georgics* 4.3–7, a passage in which Virgil introduces the mini-epic about bees that will make up much of *Georgics* 4:

> admiranda tibi leuium spectacula rerum
> magnanimosque duces totiusque ordine gentis
> mores et studia et populos et proelia dicam.
> **in tenui labor; at tenuis non gloria**, si quem
> numina laeua sinunt auditque uocatus Apollo.

> I shall sing to you of the marvelous sights of a little world, and its stouthearted leaders, and, in order, the whole race's behavior, pursuits, nations, and battles. The work is on a slender scale, but the glory is not slender—if the unfavorable gods allow it, and if Apollo hears the call.

In launching this little epic, which will be full of leaders and battles as well as ethnographic features, Virgil writes of the small scale (*leuium spectacula rerum*; *in tenui labor*) but hardly small glory (*at tenuis non gloria*) of the bees' work. He is also writing programmatically of his own refined (*in tenui*), Callimachean style and approach, which, although it too is on a smaller scale and treats *res leues*, will nevertheless earn him *gloria*.[83]

Virgil's statement of his literary aims is very similar to what Tacitus lays out at *Annals* 4.32.1–2. And the allusion to *Georgics* 4.6 at 4.32.2 (*nobis in arto et inglorius labor*) operates much like Tacitus' passage as a whole: *it too is a pretense*.[84] He ostensibly defers to his predecessor when branding his work *inglorius*, to be contrasted with the hardly slender *gloria* (*tenuis non gloria*) of Virgil. But in the adaptation of Virgil's line, Tacitus asserts his own worthiness as a successor to the poet. And, just as at *Annals* 3.55.5, in the adaptation of Virgil's line Tacitus demonstrates that, specifically, his *style* is to follow and rival that of Virgil. The words *in arto* serve on one level to contrast (facetiously, as we have seen) the narrow path demanded by his limited material with the free rein (*libero egressu*) allowed his predecessors by their richer material. But in the adaptation of Virgil's *in tenui*, the phrase

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82 As noted by Syme (1958) 339 n. 2, Martin and Woodman (1989) on 4.32.2, Moles (1998) section 3.1.8, Foucher (2000) 88, and Jenkyns (2005) 573.

83 See Thomas (1988) on 4.6 on the Callimachean aspects of this passage. Most conspicuous is Virgil's *tenuis*, a translation of Callimachus' λεπτός.

84 Syme (1958) 339 n. 2 aptly writes: "Observe ... the historian's (ostensible) depreciation of his own theme—'nobis in arto et inglorius labor' (IV.32.2). What he wished to suggest, but could not claim, was 'in tenui labor: at tenuis non gloria' (*Georgics* IV.6)." And of the allusion Foucher (2000) 88 concludes: "Une telle affirmation plaçait donc Tacite au-dessus de tous les historiens, près des poètes."

in arto also announces Tacitus' similarly refined, precise, exacting style. And he surpasses his model's refinement, when, in a show of greater *breuitas*, he compresses Virgil's *in tenui labor; at tenuis non gloria* into the more taut and economical *nobis in arto et inglorius labor*. Furthermore, might there be in Tacitus' "narrow path" a window reference to the "narrower" (στεινοτέρην) road famously trodden by Callimachus himself?[85] Is Tacitus here directing the reader to Virgil's pronouncement of his Callimacheanism (*Geo.* 4.3–7), only then to show himself just as capable a reader of the Alexandrian—and thus just as deft at the refined and allusive arts?

As I have implied in my discussions here, I read the digression at *Annals* 4.32–33 as having general application: here "an initial apology broadens out into a programmatic statement."[86] And so with the *recusatio* in 4.32 Tacitus is speaking broadly of his historical writing. He is placing himself in the tradition of historians such as Sallust and Livy who wrote of the "old affairs of the Roman people,"[87] and *also*, as we have seen, in the kindred epic tradition represented by Virgil. And so Tacitus' assertion is not just assimilative, but also creatively emulative, in that he is taking on and consciously fusing both traditions at the same time.

I have emphasized that it is stylistic continuity and rivalry with Virgil that Tacitus holds up at 4.32.2, and also at 3.55.5. But of course the ideal historiographical material that Tacitus mentions in 4.32.1, wars and kings, is

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[85] This is in the prologue to the *Aitia*, fr. 1.25–28 Pfeiffer. See also his claim to take a rarely traveled path at Epigr. 28.1–2. Wimmel (1960) 103–111 discusses Callimachus' use of the imagery of the path, and its influence on Roman authors. Especially close to Callimachus' assertion in the *Ait.* prologue (and, I suggest, Tacitus' at *Ann.* 4.32.1) are Virgil, *Geo.* 3.291–293 (*sed me Parnasi deserta per ardua dulcis* | *raptat amor; iuuat ire iugis, qua nulla priorum* | *Castaliam molli deuertitur orbita cliuo*) and Propertius, 3.1.14 (*non datur ad Musas currere lata uia*). For another suggestion of Tacitus' Callimacheanism, see Martin and Woodman (1989) on *Ann.* 4.61, where the historian extols "deliberation and toil" (*meditatio et labor*) and reproaches the "droning flow" (*canorum illud et profluens*) of the orator Haterius. See Thomas (1986) 188–189 for a discussion of "window references."

[86] Moles (1998) section 5.4, writing about *Ann.* 4.32–33 as well as 3.65.1. See too Sailor (2008) 262 ("What Tacitus has to say here defines all of *Annals*, possibly even his whole career") and Levene (2009) 227 n. 3 ("it seems more natural to understand this passage as a description of his work as a whole"), who both point to the inclusiveness of Tacitus' introductory words *pleraque eorum quae rettuli quaeque referam* at 4.32.1. Woodman (1988) 180–186 views the digression as applying particularly to the period Tacitus is then narrating, i.e. the latter part of Tiberius' reign.

[87] Both Sall. at *Hist.* fr. 1.1 and Livy at *Praef.* 1 define their material with the phrase *res populi Romani*. And when addressing the topic of Republican historiography at *Hist.* 1.1.1, Tacitus writes: *dum res populi Romani memorabantur*. See too Sempronius Asellio's definition of *historia*: *ita historias quidem esse aiunt* **rerum gestarum** *uel expositionem uel demonstrationem*, fr. 2 (= Gell. 5.18).

also the definitive stuff of epic. Virgil testifies to this at *Georgics* 4.4–5 (as we have seen), *Eclogues* 6.3, and *Aeneid* 7.41–42,[88] as do, for example, Horace at *Ars Poetica* 73 and *Odes* 4.15.1–2, and Propertius at 3.3.1–12. So, with the clear allusion to Virgil in the following sentence of 4.32 (*nobis in arto et inglorius labor*), Tacitus demands that we count the poet among the chroniclers of battles and kings in whose steps he boldly follows.

[88] *Ecl.* 6.3: *cum canerem reges et proelia*; *Aen.* 7.41–42: *dicam horrida bella,* | *dicam acies actosque animis in funera reges.*

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORY AS EPIC

The tack of *recusatio* that Tacitus puts to use in *Annals* 4.32 is available to him in the *Histories* as well. In the penultimate chapter of Book 1, as Otho prepares to meet the Vitellian armies' march on Italy, and with the Flavian movement imminent (2.1–7), Tacitus compares the crisis then to previous periods of unrest under the empire. After describing how the city's population and resources had been largely unaffected by earlier disturbances, he outlines the very different situation in the spring of 69:

> tum legiones classesque et, quod raro alias, praetorianus urbanusque miles in aciem deducti, Oriens Occidensque et quicquid utrimque uirium est a tergo, si ducibus aliis bellatum foret, longo bello materia. (1.89.2)

> Then, legions and fleets and—what happened infrequently on other occasions—the praetorian and urban troops were lined up for battle; the East and the West and whatever strength lies in each were waiting in the rear; if this had been fought by different leaders, there was the material for a long war.

The lengthy enumeration of all the forces lined up for these wars builds over the course of Tacitus' parataxis, only to be stopped short at the end of the sentence: this *could have been* a long war. So Tacitus seems to regret this waste of material, this missed opportunity for narrating a long and exciting war. But in what precedes the sentence's disappointing finish, Tacitus emphasizes in high style the historical extraordinariness of this crisis (note the pointed *tum* and *quod raro alias*), the magnitude and comprehensiveness of the soldiery involved (in the balancing pairs *legiones classesque* and *praetorianus urbanusque miles*), and, as a climax, even the war's global dimensions, with all the forces of the East and West poised to fight. Tacitus begins 1.89 by addressing the effects of the civil war on the city and its people, who "were gradually feeling the evils of war" (*sentire paulatim belli mala*, 1.89.1). By the end of the chapter the military threat has grown immeasurably; it now dangles over the city, and will of course find its way there by year's end.

And, while Tacitus states here that poor leadership led to disappointing struggles (a complaint repeated at 2.38.2), *his* narrative will still provide a long war: the 3+ books that Tacitus commits to the war-torn year 69

constitute by far the largest amount that he allots to a single year.[1] The wars of 69 will receive grand treatment in Tacitus' telling. And the claim here at 1.89.2 that the unfolding of the fighting was a letdown serves to make his accomplishment sound all the more impressive.

Opus adgredior

The *recusatio* that Tacitus employs in 1.89 is an outlier in the *Histories*: his strategies of self-presentation in this work are usually much more direct. The *Histories*' table of contents, at 1.2–3, demonstrates this well. The greatness of his material, and of his literary undertaking, he announces at the opening of the table of contents (1.2.1–2):

> opus adgredior opimum casibus, atrox proeliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace saeuum. quattuor principes ferro interempti; trina bella ciuilia, plura externa ac plerumque permixta; prosperae in Oriente, aduersae in Occidente res: turbatum Illyricum, Galliae nutantes, perdomita Britannia et statim missa, coortae in nos Sarmatarum ac Sueborum gentes, nobilitatus cladibus mutuis Dacus, mota prope etiam Parthorum arma falsi Neronis ludibrio. [2] iam uero Italia nouis cladibus uel post longam saeculorum seriem repetitis adflicta: haustae aut obrutae urbes, fecundissima Campaniae ora; et urbs incendiis uastata, consumptis antiquissimis delubris, ipso Capitolio ciuium manibus incenso. pollutae caerimoniae, magna adulteria; plenum exiliis mare, infecti caedibus scopuli.

> I approach/attack a work rich in disasters, gloomy in its battles, split by seditions, savage even in its peace. Four emperors died by the sword; there were three civil wars, more foreign ones, and often wars that were a mixture of both. Roman affairs were prosperous in the East, troublesome in the West: there was disturbance in Illyricum, the Gallic provinces wavered, Britain was tamed and then immediately released, the nations of the Sarmati and Suebi rose up together against us, the Dacians were made famous in victory and defeat, even the armies of Parthia nearly moved against us, due to the deceit of a false Nero. Now too Italy was afflicted by disasters both new and repeated after the passing of many centuries: cities in the richest part of Campania's coast were swallowed up or buried; and Rome was laid waste by fires, her oldest temples destroyed, and the Capitol itself set on fire by the hands of citizens. Religious ceremonies were befouled, adulteries great; the sea was full of exiles, its cliffs tarnished by slaughter.

[1] All of Books 1–3, along with 4.12–37 (on the beginnings of Civilis' revolt), describe events from 69. See Ash (2009) 88–90 on the "top-heavy" narrative of the *Hist.* On Tacitus' extension of the civil wars of 69 beyond the formal terminus of Vitellius' death, see below in this chapter, and the Epilogue.

The apologetic posture assumed in *Annals* 4.32, and even taken up at *Histories* 1.89.2, is nowhere to be found here at the outset of the *Histories*. For the period to be treated includes all of the ideal historiographical material for which Tacitus later pines at *Annals* 4.32.1. There, as we saw in the Introduction, he regrets that his narrative lacks "huge wars, the sieges of cities, slain and captured kings." All of this is to be found in the *Histories*, which will abound with wars (*trina bella ciuilia, plura externa ac plerumque permixta*, 1.2.1) and the deaths of leaders (*quattuor principes ferro interempti*, 1.2.1; also, at 1.3.1: *supremae clarorum uirorum necessitates*, "the final moments of distinguished men"). This is the good stuff for the historian and the reader of history, and there will be plenty of it in this work. The contents introduced at 1.2–3 match quite closely the proper, pleasurable historiographical material that Cicero recommends at *De Oratore* 2.62–64 and in his letter to the historian Lucceius (*Fam.* 5.12).[2]

But, as I discussed in the Introduction, wars and kings are at the same time the conventional subjects of epic. And at the opening of this table of contents, it is his entry into the epic tradition that Tacitus appears to hold up most conspicuously. His opening assertion, *opus adgredior … saeuum*, is, I suggest, an emulative invocation of the proem to *Aeneid* 7, the passage that introduces the Latin Wars of Books 7–12. Virgil concludes this "second proem" by stating: *maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo*, | *maius opus moueo* (7.44–45: "A greater order of events is born to me. A greater work I now begin").[3] Now, reference to one's literary work as an *opus* is common practice.[4] And the construction of *adgredior* with *opus* is not itself unique.[5] But Tacitus' use, here at the outset of his work, of *adgredior*, which can mean both "to begin" and "to attack" is acutely reminiscent of Virgil's creative use

2 As Woodman (1988) 165–167 discusses. At 70–101 he treats Cicero's historiographical prescriptions, on which see also Foucher (2000) 33–56. Herkommer (1968) 168 n. 4 and Marincola (1997) 38 situate Tacitus' presentation of his material here in the tradition of historians who build up the greatness of their subjects. Pomeroy (2012) is a recent discussion of Tacitus' place in the historiographical tradition. See too Miller (1978) 14 on the "rapid, exciting—and bewildering" chapter 1.2.

3 Ash (2002) 263 also notes Tacitus' "echo" here of Virgil's *opus moueo*.

4 See *TLL* 9.849.66ff. for an exhaustive list, and Herkommer (1968) 80–86 on conventional historiographical openings.

5 See e.g. Livy, 25.22.8, Silius 2.612, Pliny *Ep.* 10.38.1 and 10.41.2, and Ammianus, 28.2.2. I have found four other prefaces in which the author employs *adgredior*: Pompon. 1.1, Manilius, *Astr.* 1.4, Frontin., *Str.* praef. 1, and Sulp. Sev. 1.1.1. Like Tacitus, Frontin. uses *adgredior* with *opus* as a direct object: *nam cum hoc opus, sicut cetera, usus potius aliorum quam meae commendationis causa adgressus sim, adiuuari me ab his, qui aliquid illi astruent, non argui credam.*

of *moueo* in his proem. For Virgil, *moueo* brings with it the familiar connotation of political upheaval;[6] and, soon after in Book 7, the poet puts this verb in the mouth of Juno, who is about to unleash the Fury Allecto on Latium: *flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta mouebo* (7.312: "If I am unable to sway the gods above, I shall move all Hell").[7] Juno's act of disruptive agency mirrors—and in fact depends upon—the poet's similar act of violent agency at 7.45. Tacitus' use of *adgredior* is no less fraught. "Attack" is the meaning of the verb that the historian uses most often;[8] moreover, in each of the six other instances when he uses the verb to mean "begin"—which is certainly part of its meaning here—*adgredior* takes an infinitive.[9] This is no simple beginning or "approach" for Tacitus: like Virgil before him, Tacitus attacks his material in a gesture that mirrors the aggression of the combatants in the wars he will describe.[10] The more precise *adgredior* is, in fact, inherently more violent, more hostile, more war-like than Virgil's *moueo*.

Furthermore, in an arresting enallage, the adjectives with which Tacitus modifies *opus* (*opimum*, *atrox*, *discors*, *saeuum*—which I address again below) "increasingly suit the period better than they do *opus*."[11] It is as though the Roman Tacitus, like Virgil before him, consciously and meaningfully inserts himself into the action of the civil wars he is about to narrate. And each first-person declaration receives pride of place in its proem: Virgil concludes his *Aeneid* 7 proem with *maius opus moueo*, while Tacitus emphatically launches his table of contents with *opus adgredior*. With this bold, evocative phrase, then, Tacitus introduces his wars and his work as comparable to, and in fact *exceeding*, Virgil's.

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[6] See *TLL* 8.1536.84ff. and Nisbet and Hubbard (1978) on Horace, *C.* 2.1.1.

[7] On *Aen.* 7.312, and on *moueo*'s many resonances in the poem, see Hershkowitz (1998) 95–100 and Horsfall (2000) 218.

[8] Of the 42 appearances of *adgredior* in Tacitus, 23 are in the sense of "attack" (Gerber and Greef (1903) 35), in military and, metaphorically, judicial contexts. See Martin and Woodman (1989) 146 on its metaphorical use at *Ann.* 4.18.1.

[9] Gerber and Greef (1903) 35.

[10] For the authorial conceit of claiming to do what one is describing, see also Hor. *C.* 2.1.18 (with Nisbet and Hubbard (1978) ad loc.), Juv. 1.163 (with Courtney (1980) ad loc.), and, among historians (as Tony Woodman has pointed out to me), Livy, 10.31.10 (*bella quae ... agimus*). However, in an emphatic position that is comparable to *Aen.* 7.44–45 and *Hist.* 1.2.1, Livy introduces Rome's wars with the Samnites, Carthaginians, and Pyrrhus by writing, at 7.29.1: **maiora** *iam hinc* **bella** *et uiribus hostium et uel longinquitate regionum uel temporum spatio quibus bellatum est* **dicentur**. Livy's passive, impersonal *dicentur* differs significantly from the assertive *moueo* of Virgil and *adgredior* of Tacitus.

[11] Damon (2003) 83. On the artistry of this line, see also Foucher (2000) 382.

Tacitus' Expansive Wars

What follows in Tacitus' opening statement at 1.2.1 carries forward his emulative gesture. I repeat the full line: *opus adgredior opimum casibus, atrox proeliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace saeuum.* With each adjectival phrase that Tacitus attaches to *opus*, his work—and his accomplishment—grows in size. The referent here is, again, the epic tradition, as the assertion of the greater size of one's *opus* had become a convention in Roman epic. At *Aeneid* 7.45 Virgil promises a *maius opus* in the narrative of the Latin Wars, which will be "greater" than all prior wars, most significantly, the Trojan War, both Homer's and his own in *Aeneid* 2.[12] The bravado of Virgil's promise at *Aeneid* 7.45 is picked up on and expanded by Lucan, who at *Bellum Civile* 1.68 assures the reader: *immensum aperitur opus* ("An immeasurable work opens before me"). What was "greater" in Virgil becomes now "immeasurable" (*immensum*) in Lucan; his work, his civil war, will be limitless. That the fashioning of one's poem as a massive *opus* had become an epic convention seems to be confirmed by the parody of the civil-war epic that comes at sections 119 to 124 of Petronius' *Satyricon*. In the preamble to his mini *Bellum Civile*, the poet Eumolpus addresses the failed efforts of others to succeed at this task: *ecce belli ciuilis ingens opus quisquis attigerit nisi plenus litteris, sub onere labetur* (118.6: "Behold that the one who approaches the huge work of civil war, if he is not full of learning, will slip under the burden of the task"). Eumolpus' remark and the poem he then recites are thought to be a response to Lucan's *immensum opus*,[13] itself a reaction to Virgil's *maius opus*.

Into this tradition of great works Tacitus places his *opus*,[14] with the loaded opening line at 1.2.1: *opus adgredior opimum casibus, atrox proeliis, discors*

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[12] Propertius appears to refer to his contemporary's emulative undertaking when he remarks at 2.34.66: *nescio quid* **maius** *nascitur Iliade*. The popularity of Virgil's phrase *maius opus* also seems to be demonstrated by Ovid's adaptations of it at *Amores* 3.1.24 and *Trist.* 2.63. Ammianus quotes *Aen.* 7.44–45 in full, with minor variation, at the beginning of an ethnographical digression on the Gauls (15.9.1): *proinde quoniam, ut Mantuanus uates praedixit excelsus, 'maius opus moueo maiorque mihi rerum nascitur ordo,' Galliarum tractus et situm ostendere puto nunc tempestiuum.*

[13] On Petronius' response to Lucan here, see Walsh (1968), Connors (1998) 100–116, and Courtney (2001) 183–189.

[14] So similarly O'Gorman (1995) 119–124, who focuses on Tacitus' *opus* as an emulative response to the *immensum opus* of Lucan. She sees in the words *opus adgredior* Tacitus' engagement in civil war, but also an attack on his predecessor and rival Lucan. Paratore (1951) 353–354 draws up many parallels between the language in Tacitus' table of contents and that in Lucan's opening lines.

seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace saeuum. And he innovatively outdoes both Virgil and Lucan: the greater status of his work is conveyed not by a single, explicit descriptor such as *maius*, but by the marshalling of four adjectives to capture the chaos and combativeness of the period. Tacitus' work and wars are to succeed and overpass Virgil's *maius opus*, his Latin War, which is itself emulative of the Trojan War. And so Tacitus announces to the reader here in the table of contents that the meaningful repetitiveness already present in the *Aeneid* will inform, enrich, and be expanded upon in his presentation of the *Histories*' wars. Lucan too, it appears, is directly engaged in this critical line. Rather than explicitly labeling the work *immensum*, "immeasurable," and thus limitless as the author of the *Bellum Civile* did, Tacitus makes the *Histories*' scope and its wars seemingly *more* interminable by means of the line's speedy, unceasing asyndeton, and by declaring that his civil-war narrative will extend into the post-war peace, with the line's final, unforgettable phrase *ipsa etiam pace saeuum*.[15]

The sense of ongoing civil war is elaborated in the ensuing lines of the table of contents. After introducing the three proper civil wars (*trina bella ciuilia*: Otho against Vitellius; Vitellius against Vespasian; and, in 89 CE, Saturninus' revolt against Domitian)[16] and many foreign wars (*plura externa*), Tacitus notifies the reader of the frequent mixed wars that are to come in the *Histories*: *plerumque permixta*. The phrase gains point from the alliteration and assonance that bind the two words, and from its emphatic placement at the end of this list. With it Tacitus indicates that much of his war-narrative will escape definition and limits.[17]

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[15] Miller (1987) 91–92 has suggested that Tacitus also evokes Virgil just below in the table of contents, when he describes the *delatores* of the period with the phrase *agerent uerterent cuncta* (1.2.3). She compares *Aen.* 2.652–653, where Virgil uses the phrase *uertere cuncta secum* of the chaos that Anchises might create by staying behind in Troy, and also notes Lucan's description of the gods' disruptive acts as *uertere cuncta* at *BC* 7.58. While I am not sure that the phrasing is all that peculiar (see *uerto* or its compounds with *cuncta* also at *Ann.* 2.84.1, as well as Manilius, *Astr.* 1.490 and Seneca, *Ep.* 71.14 and *Q Nat.* 3.13.1; Miller notes that in the Virgilian, Lucanian, and Tacitean passages *uerto* = *euerto*), such an allusion would complement the one at 1.2.1, and would also suggest that Tacitus continued to engage with Virgil's and Lucan's language of war in his depiction of informers in the *Histories*' later books. I discuss 1.2.3 and the phrase *agerent uerterent cuncta* at greater length in the Epilogue.

[16] So Heubner (1963–1982) and Damon (2003) ad loc. In my Epilogue I discuss how Saturninus' revolt may have fit into the design of the *Hist.*

[17] Sailor's (2008) 191 translation of *plerumque permixta* as "for the most part combined together" is also attractive. Gerber and Greef (1903) 1125 (followed by all translators) place this instance of *plerumque* under its temporal sense of "often" or "frequently."

Two such hard-to-define, mixed wars are named here: the Illyrian uprising for Vespasian (*turbatum Illyricum*),[18] and the wavering of the Gallic provinces (*Galliae nutantes*). Some of Gaul's larger tribes supported the revolt led by the Batavian Julius Civilis, which began in the early fall of 69 and continued into 70.[19] After enticing us with notices about this war at several points in his earlier narrative (1.59.1, 2.69.1, and 3.46.1), Tacitus narrates its many stages and intrigues in an astounding sixty-five chapters over Books 4 and 5.[20] And he is sure to convey the complex, hard-to-pin-down "mixed" nature of this conflict (classifications of the revolt as a "simultaneously civil and foreign war" [*interno simul externoque bello*, 2.69.1] and as having "the mixed appearance of a civil and foreign war" [*mixta belli ciuilis externique facie*, 4.22.2] fulfill the promise of *bella permixta* made at 1.2.1). Whereas the Flavian partisan Josephus' summary of the war (*BJ* 7.75–88) presents it as a purely foreign one—a German attack on Rome—Tacitus weaves all of its many "civil" threads into his account.[21] The fact that the uprising against the Rhine legions was led by the former Roman auxiliary commander Civilis, who is left out of Josephus' summary entirely, is one such conspicuous thread. Civilis is a character "beyond" your typical barbarian rebel, as Tacitus states explicitly in his introductory sketch of the man: *ultra quam barbaris solitum ingenio sollers* ("He was by nature shrewd in a way beyond what is usual for barbarians," 4.13.2).[22] The historian then launches the narrative of the revolt with language drawn from the vocabulary of civil war: *nouare res hoc modo coepit* (4.14.1: "He began the revolution in the following way"). Furthermore, Tacitus informs us at 4.13.2–3 (and again at 4.32.1 and 5.26.2–3)[23]

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18 As discussed by Damon (2003) 85, with reference to 2.86.4: *momentoque temporis flagrabat ingens bellum, Illyricis exercitibus palam desciscentibus.*

19 On the dating of the revolt, and for comprehensive discussions of Tacitus' account of it, see Brunt (1960), with an appendix on the dating at 512–517, and Chilver and Townend (1985) 8–13.

20 At *Hist.* 4.12–37, 4.54–79, and 5.14–26, at which point the text of the *Hist.* breaks off.

21 The only other reference to Civilis' revolt is the brief mention at Frontin., *Str.* 4.3.14. Dio 66.3, like Josephus, does not name Civilis in his summary of German and Gallic uprisings at this time. Syme (1958) 174–175 and Brunt (1960) 494 and 507–512 follow earlier scholars in seeing the elder Pliny as a chief source for Tacitus' account of the revolt. But they (responding to Walser (1951) 123–128) are sure to emphasize Tacitus' independence from the pro-Flavian spin that we find in Josephus and would perhaps find in the Flavian supporter Pliny's account as well. In *Hist.* 2.101 Tacitus explicitly distances himself from the pro-Flavian historiographical tradition. On this distancing see Ash (2007a) 32–34.

22 See O'Gorman (1995) 124–128, Haynes (2003) 148 and 155–159, and Ash (2009) 96–97 on Civilis' status as a "mixed" foreign and civil warrior.

23 Where Civilis speaks of his correspondence with Flavian leadership, and even of an old

that Vespasian's supporters Antonius Primus and the legate of the Upper German legions Hordeonius Flaccus contacted Civilis and encouraged him to distract and tie up the pro-Vitellian German legions. The legionaries grow suspicious of Flaccus' pause in dealing with Civilis' attacks on them (4.19 and 4.24), and soon the strife within the camp in Upper Germany mirrors the conflict playing out at the same time in Italy, as Tacitus makes clear at 4.27.3: *haud dubie gregarius miles Vitellio fidus, splendidissimus quisque in Vespasianum proni: inde scelerum ac suppliciorum uices et mixtus obsequio furor, ut contineri non possent qui puniri poterant* ("Without a doubt the common soldiers were loyal to Vitellius, while each of the most distinguished men favored Vespasian; the result was the alternation of crime and punishment, and madness mixed with obedience, so that those who could be punished could not be contained"). With the death of Vitellius, Civilis' revolt becomes more cleanly defined, as an attack on Rome, the Rome now ruled by Vespasian (4.54.1). And the uprising is eventually suppressed by the field success and diplomacy of the Flavian general Petilius Cerealis (5.14–26). But by choosing to narrate the entirety of this *bellum permixtum*, including the events from 69 that tie in with the war between Vitellius and Vespasian, *after* the conclusion of that war, Tacitus in one conspicuous way extends his civil war narrative past the formal terminus of Vitellius' death at the end of Book 3, and so breaks down the textual boundaries of his civil wars.

The tag *permixta* at 1.2.1, then, along with the phrase *ipsa etiam pace saeuum*, looks ahead to the slipperiness and limitlessness of Tacitean civil war, and braces us for the many shapes that it will assume in his text. With another sentence in the table of contents, the historian introduces the concept that *past* civil wars will be repeated in the *Histories*, a theme he will pursue with greater focus at 1.50 and 2.38 (as we shall see later in this chapter). At 1.2.2 he lists the repeated disasters (*cladibus ... repetitis*) that will afflict Italy again in this work. Among them is the burning of the Capitol itself (*ipso Capitolio ciuium manibus incenso*), an emblematic moment in his narrative (3.71–72, as we shall see), but—it is emphasized here—a repeated one.[24] The

friendship with Vespasian himself: *erga Vespasianum uetus mihi obseruantia, et cum priuatus esset, amici uocabamur* (5.26.2).

[24] At 3.72.1 Tacitus makes the distinction that the burning of the Capitol in 83 BCE, during the civil war between Sulla and the Marian party, was done anonymously (*fraude priuata*), whereas in 69 CE the burning occurred in the open (*palam*). However, at 3.71.4 he expresses uncertainty about whether the Vitellians or Flavians were responsible for the act. He may be rhetorically downplaying the similarities between the two burnings, in his effort to build up the event in *his* work as "the most lamentable and most disgraceful act" in Roman history (3.72.1).

effect of this look backwards, and this classification of some of the work's disasters as repeated, is the extension *back* of the continuum of civil war, to complement the expanse of it *forward* in the text that Tacitus makes a point of emphasis here in the table of contents.

In medias res

Tacitus has another significant strategy for stretching the spread of his wars back. My focus thus far has fallen on *Histories* 1.2, and the opening to Tacitus' work / wars that it provides. But 1.2 is of course not the beginning of the work. The *Histories*' first sentence is: *initium mihi operis Seruius Galba iterum Titus Vinius consules erunt* (1.1.1: "At the beginning of my work Servius Galba, for a second time, and Titus Vinius will be consuls"). Starting the *Histories* on January 1, 69, with the assumption of the consulship by Galba and Vinius, seems to place Tacitus' work in the tradition of Republican, annalistic historiography. The most apparent model, and the one cited by all commentators here, is Sallust, who opened his *Histories* similarly: *res populi Romani M. Lepido Q. Catulo consulibus ac deinde militiae et domi gestas composui* (1.1: "I have compiled the military and domestic affairs of the Roman people, for the year when Marcus Lepidus and Quintus Catulus were consuls, and thereafter"). Tacitus' comparable opening with the consular names, along with his movement then to a comparison with prior historians (see the remainder of 1.1.1, and 1.4 of Sallust) and an assertion of impartiality (see 1.1.3 and 1.6),[25] surely serves to mark Sallust as a principal model.

But, if this opening line recalls the start of Sallust's *Histories*, with it Tacitus also calls attention to significant *differences* between his project and that of Sallust, and indeed all Republican historians.[26] As Judith Ginsburg has demonstrated in her study of the *Annals*, Tacitus employs the forms of Republican historiography, such as the listing of the consuls at year-beginning, but at the same time he exposes the hollowness of these forms

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[25] On these Sallustian parallels here, see e.g. Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc., Chilver (1979) 33, and Cole (1992) 231–235. Syme (1958) 147 also notes that Galba's early "policy" speech (*Hist.* 1.15–16) has a parallel in Lepidus' speech near the beginning of Sallust's *Hist.* (1.48). Woodman (1988) 164 spots two verbal parallels in the opening chapter: *res populi Romani* in Tacitus' second sentence (cf. *Hist.* 1.1); and, in the third sentence, *magna … ingenia*, also at *BC* 8.3.

[26] Furthermore (as Sailor (2008) 125 n. 9 observes), it is surely significant that Tacitus quotes Sallust's first words *res populi Romani* not in his opening line, but when writing specifically of Republican historiography in the following sentence: *dum res populi Romani memorabantur, pari eloquentia ac libertate.*

by treating specifically dynastic and imperial themes in his narrative.[27] I think that the opening line of the *Histories* operates in just this way: with no small measure of irony does Tacitus begin his first work of imperial historiography by naming the consuls who took office on January 1, 69. So unlike the political opponents[28] Lepidus and Catulus who were elected and entered office in 78 BCE (as Sallust's work opens), the consul Galba is emperor, and Vinius his handpicked associate. And while January 1, 78 BCE, marked for Sallust a beginning—of the magisterial year and of the contentious post-Sullan period of the Republic—for Galba and his court, and for the Rome of this period, January 1, 69, is no beginning at all. This starting point is, rather, a *middle*. As Tacitus reminds us time and again in his narrative, the turmoil of this period began in March 68 with the revolt of Vindex, the governor or Gallia Lugdunensis;[29] Galba, the governor of Spain, joined the cause in April. Though Vindex was defeated by the German legions under Verginius and committed suicide in May, by June Nero had done the same, and the senate offered the principate to Galba.[30] But the state under the new emperor was hardly stable: the presumed challengers Nymphidius Sabinus (1.5.1–2), Clodius Macer (1.7.1–2), and Fonteius Capito (1.7.1–2) were all wiped out by the incoming Galba, whose entrance into Rome was bloodied by the slaughter of thousands of opposing soldiers (see 1.6.2, 1.31.2 and 1.37.2–3).[31] Galba's appointed successor Piso's patently disingenuous emphasis on a peaceful transfer of power from Nero to Galba (1.29.2: *res sine discordia translatas*)[32] only serves to highlight just how tumultuous and *full* of *discordia* the months leading up to January 1 actually were.

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27 Ginsburg (1981) treats year-beginnings in the *Ann.* at 10–30. On the jarring juxtapositions of Republican form and imperial content, see also Martin and Woodman (1989) 78 (on *Ann.* 4.1.1).

28 On Lepidus' opposition to the Sullan party (represented by Catulus), see Plut., *Sulla* 34.4–5 and 38.1, and *Pompey* 15. Syme (1964), however, against the evidence of Plutarch, writes at 185: "It staggers belief that any candidate could stand in 79 against the will of Sulla."

29 Vindex is all over the *Hist.*, especially Book 1: the context and consequences of his revolt come up at 1.6.2, 1.8.1, 1.16.2, 1.51.1–3, 1.53.2, 1.65.2, 1.89.1, 2.6.1 (where the revolt is referred to as *proximo ciuili bello*), 2.94.2, 4.17.3, 4.57.2, and 4.69.2.

30 Chilver (1979) 6–9, drawing largely from Suetonius, Plutarch, and Dio, provides a succinct chronology of the nine months leading up to January 69. See also Murison (1993) 1–7, del Castillo (2002), and Morgan (2006) 31–56.

31 On Galba's entrance at 1.6.2, see further below.

32 The full sentence reads: *solacium proximi motus habebamus incruentam urbem et res sine discordia translatas* ("We had as solace for the recent revolution a bloodless city and power handed over without discord").

The instability and discord of the prior ten months are captured in Tacitus' presentation of the *status rerum* at Rome and abroad at 1.4–11, chapters to which I shall return in the next section. From that passage it becomes clear that the civil strife of the time was well under way on January 1, 69. "That one long year," as Aper in the *Dialogus* calls the eighteen months under Galba, Otho, and Vitellius,[33] was indeed not at all confined to the calendar year 69.

Headlong into the middle of this unruly period Tacitus sends his reader by opening the *Histories* on January 1. The beginning (in the middle) that Tacitus promises at 1.1.1 comes, after the table of contents and survey, at 1.11.3–12.1:

> hic fuit rerum Romanarum status cum Seruius Galba iterum Titus Vinius consules inchoauere annum sibi ultimum, rei publicae prope supremum. [1.12.1] paucis post kalendas Ianuarias diebus Pompei Propinqui procuratoris e Belgica litterae adferuntur, superioris Germaniae legiones rupta sacramenti reuerentia imperatorem alium flagitare et senatui ac populo Romano arbitrium eligendi permittere, quo seditio mollius acciperetur. maturauit ea res consilium Galbae iam pridem de adoptione secum et cum proximis agitantis.
>
> This was the state of Roman affairs when the consuls Servius Galba, for a second time, and Titus Vinius began their final year—nearly the last year for the state. A few days after the Kalends of January, a letter from the procurator Pompeius Propinquus arrived from Belgica, stating that the legions of Upper Germany—the obligation of their oath broken—were demanding another emperor, and were granting the power of choice to the senate and people of Rome, so that their mutiny would be received more leniently. This situation hastened the plans of Galba, who had already for a while been debating the matter of adoption with himself and his closest advisors.

Tacitus' survey is rounded off by the repetition of 1.1.1, Galba's and Vinius' assumption of the consulship. In the same sentence, the urgency of the moment—the extent to which we are indeed at a moment of crisis—is brought out by the epigram on the state's near-end in the year 69.[34] In the first two sentences of the year's narrative proper, Tacitus moves at great speed: soon after the Kalends of January, news comes that the legions of Upper Germany have broken their oath (which snaps in a quick ablative absolute: *rupta sacramenti reuerentia*) and are demanding a new emperor (the frequentative verb *flagitare* conveys the urgency). The pressing news

[33] *illum Galbae et Othonis et Vitellii longum et unum annum*, says Aper at *Dial.* 17.3. Mayer (2001) 142 glosses the phrase as "9 June 68 to 20 December 69."

[34] For a modern historian's critique of Tacitus' claim here, see Morgan (2006) 258–262.

from Germany speeds up (*maturauit*) Galba's plan to adopt, and Tacitus' narrative is up and running.

The effectiveness of this starting point of January 1 has been noted by many readers of the *Histories*. Shotter, comparing Tacitus to the writer of short stories, observes that the historian begins at a "moment of truth … a situation … which is already on the point of erupting."[35] Syme too praises Tacitus for beginning where he did: "[The historian] will wish to plunge into the stream of events, stripped for action and unencumbered by the paraphernalia of explanation."[36] Syme's apt description of Tacitus' opening tack in the *Histories* recalls Horace's famous discussion of the merits of Homeric openings. At *Ars Poetica* 146–152 Horace writes:

> Nec reditum Diomedis ab interitu Meleagri,
> nec gemino bellum Troianum orditur ab ouo;
> semper ad euentum festinat et in medias res
> non secus ac notas auditorem rapit, et quae
> desperat tractata nitescere posse relinquit,
> atque ita mentitur, sic ueris falsa remiscet,
> primo ne medium, medio ne discrepet imum.

> He does not begin the tale of Diomedes' return with the death of Meleager, nor the Trojan War with [Leda's] double egg: he always gets right to the point; and takes his audience into the middle of the events, as if they were already known; and what he thinks cannot be improved and sparkle, he omits; and in this way he deceives, and intermingles false with true things, so that the middle is not inconsistent with the beginning, nor the end with the middle.

A good storyteller does not begin from the beginning, but gets right to the issue and sends his audience *in medias res*.[37] Horace here is addressing tragedians as well as epic poets, and the *in medias res* opening was of course

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[35] Shotter (1967) 162, who argues that this is Tacitus' method for opening the *Ann.* as well.

[36] Syme (1958) 146, who sees precedent for Tacitus' choice to "plunge into the stream of events" in Sallust's starting point to the *Histories*. But see my discussion above of the very different beginning to Sallust's work of Republican historiography. Better is Syme's emphasis on the vibrancy of this date: "January 1, 69, is vital and inevitable. That day starts the action on the Rhine" (145). Chilver (1979) 33–34 criticizes Tacitus' choice of this date on the grounds that the causes for Galba's failure and Otho's rise are insufficiently explained. Hainsworth (1964) (who at 128 notes Tacitus' "plunge *in medias res*, more suitable for the novelist than the historian") cites the historian's desire to avoid treating his contemporary Verginius' allegiance to Nero as the reason for the starting point. Cole (1992) views the starting point as a way for Tacitus to pass over unseemly aspects in both Verginius' and Galba's stories.

[37] See also Servius on *Aen.* 1.34, noting that Virgil begins in the manner of Homer, "not from the beginning of [Aeneas'] wanderings" (*non ab initio coepit erroris*). On *Aen.* 1.92 he again discusses Virgil's beginning *a mediis*. Brink (1963–1982) on *AP* 148 provides a full list of ancient discussions of the *in medias res* opening.

not exclusive to poetry's high genres. Donatus, in his commentary on the preface to Terence's *Andria*, observes that "beginning from the last part of the story" (*a nouissimis argumenti rebus incipiens*) is a literary strategy of comic playwrights, as well tragedians and epicists.[38]

Beginning in the middle was (and is!) a method employed by writers of all sorts. However, it was regarded in Tacitus' time as an epic strategy, or, more specifically, a *Homeric* strategy. Tacitus' contemporary Pliny, towards the end of a letter about prosecutions in Hispania Baetica, states that he is returning to material he had omitted earlier, his order of telling now inverted (*praepostere*). He elaborates: *facit hoc Homerus multique illius exemplo, est alioqui perdecorum, a me tamen non ideo fiet* ("Homer does this, and many others after his example; it is, moreover, very beautiful, but I will not do it for that reason").[39] And Quintilian lists among the concerns of the orator "when we should begin at the beginning, and when—in the Homeric way—we should begin in the middle or at the end" (*ubi ab initiis incipiendum, ubi more Homerico e mediis uel ultimis*).[40]

So is Tacitus writing *more Homerico* when he "plunge[s] into the stream of events," as Syme puts it? More importantly, what is the benefit of opening his work in this way? The advantage for Homer and Virgil was, as Horace said, to get their audiences right *ad euentum*, right to the good stuff. Furthermore, when Homer begins the *Iliad* in the tenth year of the Trojan War, and commits twenty-four books to the events occurring over a short period within the tenth year, the reader is struck by the magnitude and richness of the war. Similarly, when Virgil opens with Aeneas and the Trojans tossed about at sea, already amid their struggles, the extent and *ongoingness* of their suffering are emphasized. At *Aeneid* 1.29–33 Virgil describes *in nuce* the point in the story where he will pick up:

> iactatos aequore toto
> Troas, reliquias Danaum atque immitis Achilli,
> arcebat longe Latio, multosque per annos
> errabant, acti fatis, maria omnia circum.
> Tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem.

> Tossed about on the whole sea, the Trojans—those left over by the Danaans and harsh Achilles—were being kept far from Latium [by Juno]; and for many years they were wandering, driven by the fates, over all the seas. So great a task it was to found the Roman race.

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38 Donatus on Terence, *Andr.* praef. 2.2. (Wessner (1902) 38).

39 Pliny, *Ep.* 3.9.28. Cicero made a similar apology to Atticus: *respondebo tibi* ὕστερον πρότερον Ὁμηρικῶς (*Att.* 1.16.1).

40 Quint. 7.10.11.

"On the *whole* sea," "for *many* years," (again) "over *all* the seas": the Trojan/Roman struggle is made vast by Virgil, and it stretches back past his starting point. The poet returns to these wanderings at sea in Aeneas' recollections in Book 3. This narrative postponement allows him to stretch out the Trojan/Roman struggle here at the opening of the *Aeneid*. Perfectly complementing Virgil's *in medias res* opening is the *epiphonema* of line 1.33, with which the poet invites us to read Aeneas' "great task" (*tantae molis*) as emblematic of the struggle of the Roman race, a struggle that of course extends beyond the poem's limits and into the lifetimes of his Roman readers.[41]

Similar goals, I suggest, motivate Tacitus' decision to open the *Histories* as he does. The plunge into the action—announced at 1.1.1 and then briskly undertaken at 1.11.3–12.1—makes for a captivating start to his story. But, by beginning in the middle of the civil war narrative, Tacitus also manages, as Homer and Virgil do, to extend the breadth of these wars. The limits on his wars' beginnings are removed, the scope and spread of the wars open up.[42] This opening, then, complements the assertions of civil war's repetitiveness / continuation / spread that we observed in the table of contents, and which we shall see reemphasized over the course of the work.

The Catalogue of Combatants

In the preceding section I argue not for a direct debt to Homer or Virgil in the *in medias res* opening to the *Histories*, but for Tacitus' assumption of a similar approach, with similar ends for his narrative. So too my argument for *Histories* 1.4–11, the historian's survey of the armies and leaders who were to shape the action of the ensuing books. Syme writes of this passage that it is "not merely a marvelous device. It appears to lack precedent or parallel in ancient historiography."[43] He is right: while the verb of inquiry with which

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[41] Austin (1971) on *Aen.* 1.33 captures well this line's easy applicability to the development of Rome generally: "Formally the reference is only to the founding of the city; but it inevitably brings to mind also the long, gradual, difficult but inexorable process by which Roman supremacy was established." On the adaptation of the phrase *tanta moles* by Ovid at *Met.* 15.1 and then Tacitus at *Ann.* 1.11.1, see Joseph (2008).

[42] Along these lines Woodman (1997) 88–97 (with a discussion of the opening of the *Hist.* at 88–90), concludes that Tacitus' "repeated manipulation of beginnings and endings suggests that he was scarcely insensitive to the seamlessness of history's web" (97).

[43] Syme (1958) 147. Chilver (1979) 45 echoes Syme, and adds that the survey "must have been enough to announce T. to his contemporaries as an historian of individual genius." McGushin (1992) 84–85 and Woodman (2003) 210–211 compare *Hist.* 1.4–11 with Thucydides'

Tacitus begins at 1.4.1 (*repetendum*, “I must review”) is the same verb that Sallust uses at the outset of early retrospectives in both the *Bellum Catilinae* (5.9) and the *Bellum Iugurthinum* (5.3),[44] the earlier historian’s passages are just that, retrospectives back into earlier Roman history. Tacitus’ eight chapters are, quite differently, a tour of the empire, with a focus on its most significant individuals and armies. Over the course of this tour, he supplies background information on the year 68. But the survey’s purpose is to prepare us for what follows, and specifically for the civil war narrative of Books 1–3.[45]

That 1.4–11 is for Tacitus fundamentally an introduction of his wars’ characters seems to be underscored by the sustained, *personifying* medical metaphor that he employs in the passage’s opening, where he writes (1.4.1):

> ceterum antequam destinata componam, repetendum uidetur qualis **status** urbis, quae **mens** exercituum, quis **habitus** provinciarum, quid in toto terrarum orbe **ualidum**, quid **aegrum** fuerit, ut non modo **casus** euentusque rerum, qui plerumque fortuiti sunt, sed **ratio** etiam **causae**que noscantur.
>
> But before I treat what I have proposed, it seems fitting that I look back at what the status of the city was, what was the mind of the armies, the condition of the provinces, what in the whole world was strong, and what was weak, so that we may learn not only the happenings and events of history—which often occur by chance—but also the reasoning and the causes.

I have put in bold the words in this passage that are commonly used of bodily and mental faculties.[46] What follows, Tacitus appears to indicate with this language, is a thorough, sweeping diagnosis of the condition of Rome’s actors—those who are healthy (*ualidum*) and those who are ill (*aegrum*)—as their story gets under way.[47]

Pentekontaetia (1.89–118) and the retrospective at the outset of Sallust’s *Hist.* Woodman also proposes that Pollio included a Pentekontaetia like Thucydides’ in his *Hist.* What distinguishes *Hist.* 1.4–11 from these passages is, I maintain here, its catalogic character.

44 Livy uses *repeto* of his historical endeavor generally twice in his Preface, at 4 and 5.

45 So Martin (1981) 69: “Whereas the first three chapters refer to the *Histories* as a whole, cc. 4–11 refer more specifically to the period of the civil wars from the death of Nero to the final victory of Vespasian at the end of *Histories* III.”

46 McCulloch (1991) 2940 and Damon (2003) ad loc. note the medical metaphor at work in the adjectives *ualidum* and *aegrum*. I thank Tony Woodman (who does not agree with me on the larger argument here) for further suggestions about the metaphorical language in 1.4.1. Fuhrmann (1960) 255–256 observes that in 1.4–11 Tacitus’ weight falls heavily on the treatment of the *aegrum*. On the use of medical metaphors by Latin historians, see Woodman (2010), with a discussion at 43–47 of Tacitus’ use of such imagery in *Ann.* 1–2.

47 Two key characters are also introduced here in the catalogue as literally unwell: Galba at 1.6.1 (*inualidum senem*) and Hordeonius Flaccus at 1.9.1 (*senecta ac debilitate pedum*

So, while the introductory survey that follows this opening may have no "precedent or parallel in ancient historiography," what it does resemble—in both form and function—is the catalogue of forces, that venerable introductory device employed by Homer and innumerable later authors towards the beginning of their battle narratives.[48] An obvious literary effect of the catalogue is the emphasis it can put on the magnitude of the forces involved. The greater the number and variety of the forces aligned for battle, the greater the battle—and the greater the work that records that battle. The catalogue, then, is an opportunity for an author to claim his place in the literary tradition, and to assert the superiority of his work over that of his predecessors. In a striking case of catalogue one-upmanship, Herodotus, amid his massive catalogue of Xerxes' troops (7.61–99), lists the size of the Persian fleet at 1,207 triremes (7.89.1). Homer's Greek catalogue at *Iliad* 2.484–759 has 1,186 ships sail against Troy, "and thus Xerxes' fleet was just enough bigger than the one commanded by Agamemnon to make the Persian War of 480 more important than the Trojan War."[49] Similarly emulative, but even more directly so, is Lucan, who at the end of his catalogue of Pompey's forces (3.169–297) explicitly states that neither Cyrus nor Xerxes nor Agamemnon sailed with as great a fleet as Pompey's (3.284–287).

Another strategy of the aggrandizing cataloger is stressing the geographical spread of the forces at war. Homer does this by following a logical geographical route around Greek territory, thus "mapping" all of Greece as Troy's attackers.[50] Lucan, who introduces the near East first (3.169–228), and then the far East (3.229–283), does not follow as logical a course as Homer, but rather states explicitly the global reach of Pompey's forces. The poet begins and ends his catalogue with references to the entire earth's involve-

inualidum). Miller (1987) 92–93 has suggested that *inualidum senem* is an allusion to *Aen.* 12.132, where Virgil describes the old men in Latinus' besieged city as *inualidique senes*. But see, as she notes, the similar phrases at 1.9.1 (*senecta … inualidum*) and 4.14.1 (*senes aut inualidos*) and the fact that both Plutarch (*Galba* 15.4) and Dio (64.3.4) also describe the emperor as old and weak (each with the adjectives γέρων and ἀσθενής) in their accounts of his march to Rome, which is discussed in *Hist.* 1.6 too.

48 West (1997) 208 defines the catalogue as "not the isolated accommodation of a 'traditional document', but a feature of the epic poet's technique for launching battle narrative."

49 Flower (2007) 823, who goes on to state: "Much is uncertain, but one thing should be taken as a given: Xerxes did not depart from Asia with a fleet of anything near 1,207 triremes." At 7.20.2 Herodotus explicitly states the superiority in size of Xerxes' forces over those of the sons of Atreus. On how Herodotus assumes strategies similar to Homer's in his catalogue, see Erbse (1992) 125–127. On Homeric elements in Herodotus more generally, see Strasburger (1972), Boedeker (2002), and Rengakos (2006).

50 See Kirk (1985) 183–186 on the geographical ordering of the catalogue of Greek ships.

ment on behalf of Pompey. At 3.169–170 the totalizing catalogue is introduced with the statement: *interea totum Magni fortuna per orbem | secum casuras in proelia mouerat urbes* ("Meanwhile, across the whole world the fortune of Magnus had moved cities to fall in battle with him"); and the sentiment is repeated at the catalogue's conclusion, at 3.296–297: *acciperet felix ne non semel omnia Caesar, | uincendum pariter Pharsalia praestitit orbem* ("So that fortunate Caesar could take all in one blow, Pharsalia offered the world to him, to be conquered at the same time").[51]

In presenting the great geographical dimensions of his catalogue, Tacitus employs both of these techniques. Like Homer, he maps the characters involved in his civil wars in an orderly route.[52] He begins with his characters in Rome, the site for the first four chapters of the survey (1.4–7): first, a look at different classes' responses to the death of Nero (1.4.2–3); then in 1.5 a much longer introduction to the urban soldiers (made up of the praetorian and urban cohorts), unhappy about Galba's stinginess, and some still sympathetic with the plans of the killed praetorian prefect Nymphidius Sabinus; in 1.6 come formal introductions of Galba and his influential allies, the co-consul Vinius and the new prefect Laco, and mention of the growing accumulation of troops at Rome, including Galba's Spanish legion and other units recently conscripted by Nero; and with 1.7.1–2 Tacitus introduces (by way of reports coming to Rome) two characters who will be conspicuously absent from his narrative, Clodius Macer, the legate in Africa, and Fonteius Capito, the governor of Lower Germany, both wiped out due to suspicions of plotting.

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[51] On further strategies by Lucan to make this catalogue "encompass the whole world," see Hunink (1992a) 104, as well as Jal (1963) 277. In Galba's speech announcing the adoption of Piso (1.15–16), he describes Vindex's and his revolt as "this movement that has shaken the world" (*hoc* **concussi orbis** *motu*, 1.16.3). The arresting collocation *concussus orbis* recalls Lucan's description of his poem's battlefield in the proem of the *BC*: *certatum totis* **concussi** *uiribus* **orbis** (1.5). So here, in a speech that is in many ways programmatic of key themes in the *Hist.* (Keitel (1991) 2774–2776; Gowing (2005) 102–104), Tacitus may be specifically comparing the global scale and the disorder of his civil wars with Lucan's.

[52] Macrobius (5.15.1–8) seems to assert that the "proper" organization of a catalogue was geographical. He regards Virgil's catalogue at *Aen.* 7.641–817 (which I discuss below) as inferior to Homer's (*in nonnullis paululum a grauitate Homerica deuiauit*), and one of his grounds for criticism is Virgil's haphazard geographical order, to be contrasted with the logical geographical procession of Homer's catalogue. Heinze (1993) 352 is one who does find geographical order in Virgil's catalogue.

Sage (1990) 881 n. 140 and Damon (2003) 99 suggest that Augustus' overview of the empire (described by Suetonius at *Aug.* 101.4: *breuiarium totius imperii, quantum militum sub signis ubique esset*) may have been a model for Tacitus' survey here. At 881–882 Sage also offers that the closest analogy to *Hist.* 1.4–11 is ethnographic literature such as the *Germ.*

From Rome the survey moves to Spain, now under the control of Cluvius Rufus, and then to Gaul, whose states were variously content or displeased with the ascent of Galba (1.8.1). The movement eastward continues in 1.8.2 to the German armies, whose combination of anger (at supporting the ultimately losing side, Nero's, in the conflict against Vindex-Galba) and arrogance (from their victory over Vindex) made them very dangerous players in what was to come (*Germanici exercitus, quod periculosissimum in tantis uiribus, solliciti et irati, superbia recentis uictoriae et metu tamquam alias partis fouissent*). The legate of the army of Upper Germany was the weak and unpopular Hordeonius Flaccus; and the governor of Lower Germany was the consular Aulus Vitellius, appointed by Galba (1.9.1). Germany's neighbor Britain (1.9.2) was quiet, while the armies of Illyricum (1.9.3), though separated from each other and thus less volatile, had approached Verginius with offers of support, and so could do so again. From Illyricum Tacitus heads further east, to Syria and its governor Mucianus, whose influence Tacitus captures in the longest character sketch in the survey (1.10.1–2); and then to Judea, where Vespasian was conducting the Jewish War (1.10.3). After stops in Egypt (with its longtime strategic significance) in 1.11.1, and Africa (whose legions awaited a leader, in the absence of the terminated Clodius Macer) in 1.11.2, Tacitus considers a few unarmed provinces before concluding the tour of the empire back in the most significant of the unarmed regions, Italy.

So the players in Tacitus' civil wars. By circling the Roman world, the historian conveys the enormity of his field of battle.[53] By concluding with Italy—and with a note on its defenselessness (1.11.3: *cuicumque seruitio exposita*, "exposed to the subjection of each and every ruler")—he hints that all of these forces, all of the world, will converge on Italian soil.[54] Like Lucan at *BC* 3.169, Tacitus makes explicit the global reach of his catalogue in its introduction at 1.4.1 (which I have printed in full above). There the scope of the survey to come—and of the field of battle—grows with each indirect question: from the city (*qualis status urbis*), to the armies there and elsewhere (*quae mens exercituum*), out to the provinces (*quis habitus provinciarum*), and then to the entire world (*quid in toto terrarum orbe ualidum, quid aegrum fuerit*). The expansion of the catalogue's geographical dimensions is echoed in the increasing length of syllables in these

[53] Of the historian's movement in this passage, Syme (1958) 147 writes: "Alert and unclogged, Tacitus moves from one end of the world to the other and returns quickly to Rome."

[54] See similarly my discussion of *Hist.* 1.89.2 at the opening of this chapter.

clauses.[55] And, in the same manner as Lucan at 3.169 and 3.297, Tacitus is stretching the truth when lining up the whole world as characters in his narrative. This aggrandizing, globalizing strategy of self-presentation is also apparent in his famous statement at 1.4.2: *finis Neronis … omnes legiones ducesque conciuerat, euolgato imperii arcano, posse principem alibi quam Romae fieri* ("The death of Nero … had roused all the legions and generals, with the secret of empire out, that one could become emperor somewhere other than Rome"). The ascent of Galba in Spain demonstrated that an emperor, if sufficiently backed by troops, could emerge from anywhere in the Roman world. Vitellius in Germany and Vespasian in the East would of course follow Galba's lead.

While the survey at 1.4–11 shares with the catalogue of Pompey's forces in *Bellum Civile* 3 the brash, hyperbolic manner of globalizing its dimensions, Tacitus' catalogue also has much in common with the striking "catalogue in reverse" that Lucan presents at 1.392–465.[56] There, after preparing the reader for a description of the Roman cohorts that will follow Caesar out of Gaul (1.392–395), Lucan catalogues, rather, the fearsome Gallic peoples that are being left behind by Caesar and his men. The effect of the passage is a doubly troubling one, offering powerful commentary on the paradoxes of this civil war: not only are Caesar's troops abandoning Rome's defensive stations to the north and giving their Gallic foes hopes for rebellion, but they are doing so in order to attack Rome itself. Lucan underscores this unsettling point by opening and closing the catalogue with the same words for the Caesareans' desertion of Gaul (*deseruere*, 1.396; *deseritis*, 1.465) and their corresponding attack on Rome (*Romam … petit*, 1.395; *petitis Romam*, 1.464).[57] Whether or not Tacitus had Lucan's innovative catalogue in mind, the very same paradox is operative in 1.4–11, but on a grander scale than in *BC* 1.392–465. As we have seen, Tacitus circles the Roman world in his passage, an impressive demonstration of the geographical breadth of Roman power. But of course many of the armies catalogued here are soon to abandon their stations, in order to go battle other Roman forces. In such acts of desertion they—like Caesar's troops in the *BC*—give hope and confidence

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55 The clauses are of 6, 7, 9, and 17 syllables, as Damon (2003) 100 notes. On this expansion, see also below in this section.

56 The expression is that of Williams (1978) 222. On this catalogue see esp. Batinski (1992) and Roche (2009) ad loc.

57 On this ring composition see Batinksi (1992) 20–21, who also suggests that here "Lucan artfully confuses Caesar and his legions with the Gallic tribes" and so "makes these Romans the enemy" (24).

to the enemies on the empire's borders, a point Tacitus emphasizes several times in the coming narrative.[58] And a great number of these legionary "deserters" are headed for one destination: over the course of the year 69 troops who on January 1 had been stationed in Gaul, Upper and Lower Germany, Britain, Moesia, Pannonia,[59] and Syria all make their way to Italy, whose ripeness for attack, we recall, is pointedly brought out by Tacitus at the end of his catalogue (*ipsa in primis Italia, cuicumque seruitio exposita*, 1.11.3). The invading legions, no longer guarding the empire's frontiers, will battle and/or hover over Italy, the *totus orbis* converging cataclysmically upon the *urbs*.

Foreshadowing in the Catalogue

While Tacitus' catalogue of characters shares with Homer's and Lucan's strategies for globalizing and thus magnifying the wars that are to come, he also uses this passage to prepare us for his grand war narrative in less "big" ways. In introducing the actors that will drive his wars, the historian's method is concise,[60] suggestive, even suspenseful. For example, Galba's pitiful end is anticipated by Tacitus' word choices when describing in brief the emperor's arrival at Rome, and the massacre then of a group of discontened marines, in 1.6.2. There he writes: *introitus in urbem* **trucidatis** *tot milibus* **inermium militum** *infaustus omine atque ipsis etiam qui occiderant formidolosus* ("His entrance into the city, with so many thousands of unarmed soldiers slaughtered, was unlucky in its omen and was fearful even to the killers"). Galba's slaughter (*trucidatis*) of the unarmed soldiers (*inermium militum*) acutely foreshadows the reversal of this, the attack on him, which Tacitus describes with the very same words at 1.40.2: **milites** *Romani … imperatorem suum* **inermem** *et senem* **trucidare** *pergerent*.[61] That he has

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58 The Rhoxolani (1.79.1), Dacians (3.46.2), and Gauls (4.55.4) are all encouraged by the distracting events of the civil wars to make moves to reclaim territory. On the opportunism of the Rhoxolani and Dacians in these passages, see Ash (2010b) 150–152, who also compares their reactions to those of the Gauls at *BC* 1.392–465.

59 Illyricum (1.9.3) being inclusive of the legions stationed in Moesia and Pannonia. See Wellesley (1972) 216–220 and Chilver (1979) 18–19 on the locations of the Roman legions in the year 69.

60 Damon (2003) 100 remarks that in chapters 4–11 there are, "in addition to T.'s ordinary brevities, expressions showing remarkable compression."

61 Ash (1999) 79 also notes that both Galba's victims and then the emperor himself are unarmed at death.

shaped the material in this way may be demonstrated by the fact that Plutarch specifically notes that Galba's victims drew swords (*Galba* 15.4).[62]

Soon afterwards, Tacitus describes the many and varied military units now filling Rome (*plena urbs exercitu insolito*, 1.6.2), and concludes the chapter by stating: *ingens nouis rebus materia, ut non in unum aliquem prono fauore, ita audenti parata* ("There was a huge amount of material for a revolution; and, though not showing favor towards anyone in particular, they were ready for the one who was bold enough"). The dramatically placed *audenti* prepares us for the emergence of Otho, whose coup will rely on the support of the malcontented legionaries and praetorians crowded together at Rome.[63] And boldness is *the* defining characteristic of Otho in the *Histories*. Tacitus highlights it in, for example, Otho's preparations for the coup (see especially 1.21.2 and 1.22.1, and the bravado in his speech to the praetorian camp at 1.37.1–38.2),[64] and then in the heroic suicide described in admiring detail at 2.46–49. So, while Otho is otherwise left out of chapters 4 to 11, the reference to him at 1.6.2 by his veritable epithet, *audens*, makes his presence in the catalogue *more* pointed, and his named arrival in the narrative at 1.13.2 all the more exciting.[65]

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[62] Though, as Morgan (2003) 495 discusses (following Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc. and Chilver (1979) ad loc.), "*inermis* can be used of troops carrying only some of the accoutrements with which they should have been equipped." He notes such a use of the adjective at *Hist.* 1.79.4 and by other authors. Neither Suetonius (*Galba* 12.2) nor Dio (64.3.1) discuss whether the troops were armed. The problems according Galba's arrival at Rome make it just the opposite of what a proper, welcoming *aduentus* should be (on which see Pearce (1970) 313–316 and Woodman (1977) 130–131).

[63] Tacitus emphasizes the mixture of legionaries, auxiliaries, and praetorians among Otho's supporters at 1.38.3 (on which see Damon (2003) ad loc.).

[64] At 1.21.2 Otho considers (in *oratio obliqua*) when to act: *proinde agendum audendumque, dum Galbae auctoritas fluxa*. At 1.22.1 Tacitus highlights his courage: *non erat Othonis mollis et corpori similis animus*. And note the exhortation that concludes his speech to the camp, at 1.38.2: *nullus cunctationis locus est in eo consilio, quod non potest laudari nisi peractum* (with which we can compare more spurning of delay by Otho at 1.89.3 and 2.40). Furthermore, at 1.25.1 Otho deems it necessary to confirm the boldness of his accomplices (*postquam uario sermone callidos audacesque cognouit*). And *audacia* is among the qualities attributed to him (via the impersonal *ducebatur*) at 2.31.1. At the moment of his accession Otho does experience some trepidation (1.27.2, where he trembles (*trepidum*) at the paucity of praetorians swearing allegiance to him)—a sensation that is absent at his suicide scene (note *nequaquam trepidus et consilii certus* at 2.46.1, with my discussion in Chapter 4). See Keitel (1987) esp. 78–79 on how Otho's characteristic boldness is apparent in all of his speeches in the *Hist.*

[65] Damon (2003) 110 writes that "*audenti* describes Otho … but does not identify him; soldiers, not leaders, were the decisive factor." But Otho is not merely a beneficiary of circumstance in the *Hist.* The character is treated with great attention, and with a consistent

The introductions of the other emperors-to-be also gain potency through understatement and insinuation. Though not as minimalist as the presentation of Otho at 1.6.2, the introduction of Vitellius at 1.9.1 is similarly sparse—and fraught. Of his appointment to the governorship of Lower Germany, we read only: *missu Galbae A. Vitellius aderat, censoris Vitellii ac ter consulis filius: id satis uidebatur* ("By the bidding of Galba, Aulus Vitellius was in command, son of the censor and three-time consul Vitellius: this seemed to be sufficient reasoning for the appointment"). Implicit here is an assessment of Galba's poor judgment in appointing Vitellius, as he relied only on the merits of the man's illustrious father. Through the calculated omission of any of Vitellius' other significant credentials,[66] Tacitus also suggests the man's lack of qualification for the post in Germany, much less for the principate.[67] In another statement of pregnant concision, Tacitus begins his chapter on Mucianus and Vespasian with: *Oriens adhuc immotus* ("The East was still unmoved," 1.10.1). The inclusion of *adhuc* hints that these two will not remain uninvolved for long.[68] We also get a glimpse of Mucianus' role in the coming narrative, when, at the conclusion of his character sketch of the governor of Syria, Tacitus writes: *et cui expeditius fuerit tradere imperium quam obtinere* (1.10.2: "He was one for whom it would be easier to hand over power than to take it for himself").

A varied and violent diction of unrest also fills the catalogue, and serves to anticipate the heightened turmoil that is to come.[69] Leaders and troops are stirred up (*conciuerat*, 1.4.2), the urban soldiers are roused (*agitatur*, 1.5.1), grumble (*increpantium* and *aspernantes*, 1.5.2), and feel strangled (*angebat*, 1.5.2) by the severity of Galba, who himself is being torn down (*destruebant*, 1.6.1) by the influence of Vinius and Laco. Meanwhile, the soldiers in Germany are distressed and angry (*solliciti et irati*, 1.8.2), and outraged (*indigna-*

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focus on his boldness and resolve (both for the state's harm, and later for its good). On the consistency of Tacitus' characterization of Otho, see Keitel (1987) 78–79 and Ash (1999) 90–94.

66 Left out, for example, is reference to Vitellius' own consulship in 48, and his proconsulship of Africa in 60 or 61.

67 Of *id satis uidebatur*, Chilver (1979) 61 writes, "That the words are heavily ironical is clear" and considers whether the statement amounts to a reproach of the soldiers who supported Vitellius as well as of Galba and his circle.

68 Tacitus uses *adhuc* with similar pregnancy at 1.14.1, of Vitellius: *nihil adhuc de Vitellio certum*.

69 Fuhrmann (1960), in his discussion at 254–261 of how chapters 4–11 look forward more than back, similarly notes (at 258–259) the language of tumult found especially in chapters 5 (on the urban soldiery) and 8.2–9.1 (on the troops in Germany).

bantur, 1.8.2) at the murder of Capito, while raging at (*furentes*, 1.9.1)[70] and enflamed by (*accendebantur*, 1.9.1) the weakness of their legate, Hordeonius Flaccus. In the catalogue also comes repeated reference to *nouae res*, "revolution." As we saw above, Tacitus regards the mob of legionaries gathered in Rome as *ingens nouis rebus materia* (1.6.2: "a huge amount of material for a revolution").[71] When introducing the unhappy urban soldiers at 1.5.1, he similarly labels them "ready for revolution" (*pronus ad nouas res*). And at 1.7.2, during his discussion of the murder of Capito in 68, Tacitus addresses the belief that Capito did not in fact have revolution on his mind (*cogitatione rerum nouarum abstinuisse*) and was betrayed by his ambitious legates. Whether or not Capito was guilty of treason, the mention of his case here contributes to the sense that revolution, which was about to escalate, was in the air as Tacitus' narrative picks up.

Tacitus' way of enticing the reader, hinting at the roles that his characters will play, and creating dramatic pregnancy in his catalogue is comparable with the proleptic manner of Virgil in his catalogue of Latin warriors at *Aeneid* 7.641–817. For example, the doom of Lausus for following his father Mezentius is foreshadowed in the poet's preemptive lament at 7.653–654: *dignus patriis qui laetior esset* | *imperiis et cui pater haud Mezentius esset* ("He was worthy of more happiness under his father's command, and of a father other than Mezentius"). The chilling *nequiquam* ("in vain") in 7.652 also prepares us for the failure of Lausus and those who accompany him.[72] Virgil anticipates Turnus' end too, though more indirectly. The Rutulian leader's sight is imposing, and his armor sparkles (7.783–788); but on his shield is engraved his fellow Argive Io (7.789–790), whom Juno famously transformed into a heifer. That same goddess' manipulation of Turnus in Books 7–12 brings about his metamorphosis (and his death).[73] And the purple and gold with which Camilla dresses herself at 7.814–816 foretell her death, brought on by her covetous pursuit of the purple and gold attire of the Phrygian priest Chloreus (11.771–779).[74]

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[70] See below in this chapter on Tacitus' use of the language of *furor* in the *Hist.*

[71] At 26.40.18 Livy uses the phrase *materiam nouandis rebus* of the dangerous riffraff (*mixti ex omni conluuione*, 26.40.17) whom the consul Laevinus removes from Sicily over to Italy in 210 BCE. If Tacitus is alluding to Livy's phrase and context here, then through the allusion the gathered legionaries at Rome become even more troublesome and capable of revolution.

[72] As Duckworth (1933) 9 discusses. On the forecasting in the catalogue of Lausus' and Camilla's roles in the *Aeneid*, see also Fraenkel (1945) 11.

[73] On Turnus and Io, see Putnam (1970) 425, Gale (1997), and Thomas (1998) 285–288.

[74] Putnam (1970) 415, n. 8.

Anticipation, foreshadowing, suspense—these are the methods of characterization that Virgil and Tacitus alike employ in their catalogues. While I am not arguing for a direct debt in this regard, it is notable that the two launch their catalogues in similar, and similarly enticing, ways. The similarities may demonstrate that Tacitus is again, as at 1.2.1, modeling an opening on Virgil, and again aiming to outdo his predecessor. I reprint here 1.4.1:

> ceterum antequam destinata componam, repetendum uidetur qualis status urbis, quae mens exercituum, quis habitus prouinciarum, quid in toto terrarum orbe ualidum, quid aegrum fuerit.

And the invocation that begins Virgil's catalogue, at *Aeneid* 7.641–645:

> Pandite nunc Helicona, deae, cantusque mouete,
> qui bello exciti reges, quae quemque secutae
> complerint campos acies, quibus Itala iam tum
> floruerit terra alma uiris, quibus arserit armis;
> et meministis enim, diuae, et memorare potestis;
> ad nos uix tenuis famae perlabitur aura.

> Now open up Helicon, goddesses, and begin your songs, about which kings were roused to war, which battle-lines, following each leader, filled the fields, with what men even then the nurturing Italian land flourished, with what weapons she glowed. For you, divine ones, remember, and can recall; to us the slender breath of fame barely glides down.

A significant formal detail distinguishes the introductions: whereas the bard Virgil calls on the Muses to remember for him the great detail of the ensuing catalogue,[75] Tacitus' act of recollection (*repetendum uidetur*) is his own. But the two authors take a very similar approach in their use of crescendo and expansion. As I discussed above, Tacitus heralds the introduction of his cast by bounding out from the city to the provinces, and then to the entire world. In a comparable progression, Virgil moves in lines 642 to 644 from individuals (*reges*), to the forces that follow them (*acies*), and then to all of Italy. And the length of the clauses grows with the broadening of the scope, from eight syllables (*qui … reges*), to fourteen (*quae … acies*), to twenty-three (*quibus Itala … armis*).[76] This is exactly what Tacitus does at *Histories* 1.4.1,

[75] Following Homer's invocation at *Il.* 2.484–486.

[76] Each also uses what Harrison (1991) 112 calls "prooemiac syntax," defined as "the use of one or more indirect questions in invocations and prefaces to summarize the contents to come." Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc. compares Tacitus' language here to that of Velleius at 2.99.3 (*quis fuerit eo tempore ciuitatis habitus, qui singulorum animi, quae digredientium a tanto uiro omnium lacrimae, quam paene ei patria manum iniecerit, iusto seruemus operi*). But the context of Velleius' passage is very different: it regards contemporary opinions about Tiberius' leave from Rome under Augustus in 6 BCE.

where his clauses expand from six, to seven, to nine, and then to seventeen syllables. The effect is the same in each passage: to excite the reader about the growing reach and magnitude of the narrative to come. Virgil's method is the *tricolon abundans*; Tacitus exceeds this progression by his use of four expanding clauses. And while Virgil's warriors arrive from all parts of Italy, Tacitus' forces hail from all over the globe. His catalogue, his wars, his work will embrace the whole world.

A Model Reading of Civil War: Hist. *1.50*

So the strategies of the epic poet—the *in medias res* opening, the aggressive embrace of an *opus* that is to outdo its predecessors, and an equally sprawling and enticing catalogue of combatants—are deployed by Tacitus at the launch of his civil wars. I move now to a passage later in the *Histories*' opening book, one that articulates as well as any in the work the fundamental repetitiveness and ongoingness of Roman civil war. This is 1.50, a chapter that looks ahead to the civil war that follows in the *Histories*, and also back, to earlier civil wars and earlier civil war literature. Tacitus places the chapter, which has no equivalent in the parallel tradition,[77] at an unmissable position in his narrative: just after Galba's obituary (1.49), and just before the account of the Vitellian armies' southbound march (1.51–70). The reflections on civil war past, present, and future here are done, significantly, by a group of contemporary, nameless Romans.[78] This "on location" response to civil war by an internal audience is, I will argue here, revealing about the appropriate response from Tacitus' external audience.[79] As we shall see, they do not get everything right about the past. But to a great degree their reaction to the events of 69 stands as a model reading for Tacitus' readers. I print the full chapter here:

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[77] Of 1.50 Syme (1958) 183 writes: "This is pure Tacitus." The only comparable report of sentiments in Rome in the parallel tradition is at Dio 64.9.1–2, where, soon after Galba's murder, Dio attributes to a nameless "they" resentment towards Otho for his bribery of the praetorians and his disregard for the senate and people.

[78] Ash (2010a) considers the diverse make-up of the group (*non senatus modo et eques, … sed uolgus quoque*, 1.50.1) and asks: "Could it be that the civil wars of AD 69 are actually having a beneficial impact, however briefly, in fostering *concordia* between the different strata of society?" (121–122). She goes on to suggest that it is, rather, "passive fatalism" that unites the group (123).

[79] On Tacitus' depiction of "readers" within his narrative, and on their penchant for misreading, see O'Gorman (2000) 13–14, 37–38, and *passim*. At 13 she writes: "Tacitus' reader follows the characters (and sometimes the narrator) in the act of reading, not always coming to the same conclusion; the differences as well as the parallels are suggestive."

trepidam urbem ac simul atrocitatem recentis sceleris, simul ueteres Othonis mores pauentem nouus insuper de Vitellio nuntius exterruit, ante caedem Galbae suppressus, ut tantum superioris Germaniae exercitum desciuisse crederetur. tum duos omnium mortalium impudicitia ignauia luxuria deterrimos uelut ad perdendum imperium fataliter electos non senatus modo et eques, quis aliqua pars et cura rei publicae, sed uolgus quoque palam maerere. [2] nec iam recentia saeuae pacis exempla sed repetita bellorum ciuilium memoria captam totiens suis exercitibus urbem, uastitatem Italiae, direptiones prouinciarum, Pharsaliam Philippos et Perusiam ac Mutinam, nota publicarum cladium nomina, loquebantur. [3] prope euersum orbem etiam cum de principatu inter bonos certaretur, sed mansisse C. Iulio, mansisse Caesare Augusto uictore imperium; mansuram fuisse sub Pompeio Brutoque rem publicam. nunc pro Othone an pro Vitellio in templa ituros: utrasque impias preces, utraque detestanda uota inter duos, quorum bello solum id scires, deteriorem fore qui uicisset.[80] [4] erant qui Vespasianum et arma Orientis augurarentur, et ut potior utroque Vespasianus, ita bellum aliud atque alias clades horrebant. et ambigua de Vespasiano fama, solusque omnium ante se principum in melius mutatus est.

The trembling city, frightened by the atrocity of the recent crime and also by Otho's chronic behavior, was given additional terror by the fresh news about Vitellius. The news had been suppressed before Galba's murder, so that it would be believed that only the army from upper Germany had revolted. Then the two worst of all mortals, in their shamelessness, their cowardice, and their extravagance—apparently chosen by fate to destroy the empire—not only the senate and the knights, who had some share and interest in the state, but the common folk too were openly mourning. [2] No longer were they talking about the recent examples of a savage peace, but, recalling the memory of the civil wars, they were discussing their city, so often captured by its own armies, the devastation of Italy, the plunderings of the provinces, Pharsalia, Philippi, as well as Perusia and Mutina, the well-known names of national disasters. [3] The whole world, they said, was nearly turned upside down when the struggle for the principate was fought among good men; but the empire held up under Gaius Julius, and it held up under Caesar Augustus after his victory; and the republic would have held up under Pompey and Brutus. Now they were going to go to the temples for Otho, or for Vitellius: prayers for either would be impious, vows to either of the two, detestable. The one thing, they said, that you would know from their war was that the victor would end up being the worse of the two. [4] There were those who were predicting Vespasian and the armies of the East. And, although Vespasian was more capable than either Otho or Vitellius, the people were trembling at the thought of another war and other disasters. Vespasian's reputation was uncertain, and, unlike all the principes before him, he alone changed for the better.

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[80] I follow Damon (2003) in inserting a colon after *ituros* in 1.50.3, not a question mark, as Heubner (1978) does.

In fashioning a contemporaneous, model response to the horrors of civil war, Tacitus stresses, first of all, the fear of Rome's inhabitants. The chapter opens with the emphatic *trepidam urbem*, an impression doubly compounded by the addition of the nearly synonymous *pauentem*, used of their fear of Otho, and then the verb *exterruit*, of the effect on the city of news about Vitellius. At the end of the chapter their fear is compounded yet again, when the possibility of yet another war, started by Vespasian, causes them to bristle with dread (*horrebant*, 1.50.4). The Romans' harried, emotional state, and in particular their fears about Otho and Vitellius, are further conveyed by their sentimentalizing of the leadership of the late Republic as *boni* (1.50.3)—a nostalgia that Tacitus is sure to correct in his own voice elsewhere, most explicitly in *Histories* 2.38, a passage that I discuss later in this chapter.[81]

The other sensation that these model Romans experience, and that Tacitus makes conspicuous through the diction in this chapter, is a keen awareness of how familiar and repeated the events of 69 CE are. In their discussion of past civil wars, the first things they mention are "their city, so often captured by its own armies" and "the devastation of Italy" (1.50.2: *captam totiens suis exercitibus urbem, uastitatem Italiae*). These happenings from the past are of course precisely the events of Tacitus' civil wars. As we have seen, the *Histories*' table of contents promises us a city captured by its own armies (1.2.2: *urbs incendiis uastata ... ipso Capitolio ciuium manibus incenso*) and the destruction of Italy (1.2.2: *Italia nouis cladibus uel post longam saeculorum seriem repetitis adflicta*).[82] Of course we get these two events, in grand style, at 3.69–4.1 and throughout Books 2 and 3,[83] respectively. Furthermore, when the rebelling Gauls gathered in Cologne in Book 4 sum up the condition of the Rome of that time—in essence a summary of the *Histories*' narrative to that point—their descriptions of the present mirror closely the Romans' recollections in 1.50 of the the past: *certatim proclamant*

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[81] Ash (1999) 82 and (2010a) 121–126 and Joseph (2012b) 169–173 discuss Tacitus' correction in 2.38 of the Romans' comments at 1.50.3. For Tacitus' view of the late Republic, see also the dark pictures he paints at *Dial.* 36–41 and *Ann.* 3.27.2–28.1. And see Sage (1991) for Tacitus' "harsh and unrelenting view of the last century of the Republic" (3419) across his works; as well as Syme (1958) 547–550 (548: "Tacitus is devoid of illusions about the old order") and Griffin (2009) 172–173. On the related matter of the change in what constituted *libertas* from the Republic to the Empire, see Morford (1991) and Oakley (2009a).

[82] Paratore (1951) 354–355 n. 21 and Chilver (1979) 110 also note the similarities between *Hist.* 1.2 and 1.50.

[83] See esp. 2.56 (with my discussion in Chapter 3), as well as e.g. 2.12.1, 2.62.1, 2.70.1, 2.87.2, and 3.49.1.

furere discordiis populum Romanum, caesas legiones, **uastatam Italiam**, **capi cum maxime urbem**, *omnis exercitus suis quemque bellis distineri* (4.55.4: "In earnest they were exclaiming that the Roman populace was raging with discord, that legions had been slaughtered, Italy had been devastated, that at that moment the city was under siege, that every army was detained, each by its own war"). The third occurrence from past civil wars that the Romans of 1.50 remember, the "plunderings of the provinces" (*direptiones prouinciarum*, 1.50.2), is also strikingly topical to their time and to this narrative: for example, such activity will feature prominently in the very next section of the work, when the Vitellians storm and loot their way through Gaul.[84]

The mirroring of civil war past and present that emerges from the Romans' words may also come out in the employment of the word *clades* in 1.50. At 1.50.2 the Romans discuss Pharsalia, Philippi, Perusia, and Mutina, called the *nota publicarum cladium nomina*. Then at 1.50.4 they tremble at the thought of another war and other disasters (*bellum aliud atque alias clades horrebant*). There they certainly are dreading the *alias clades* that would follow upon Vespasian's claim to power, coming so soon after the *clades* brought on by the contests between Galba and Otho, and then Otho and Vitellius. But at the same time they may fear the *alias clades* as the sequel to the famed *clades publicae* of the late Republic. *Clades* is by no means an extraordinary word, but it is one that Tacitus uses prominently of the contents of his narrative in 1.2–3 (see *nouis cladibus uel … repetitis* at 1.2.2 and *atrocioribus populi Romani cladibus* at 1.3.2); later, as we shall see in Chapter 3, of the repeated Battles of Cremona (*duabus iam Romanis cladibus notus infaustusque*, 2.23.2); and of the fall of the Capitol (*quo tantae cladis pretio?*, 3.72.1, to be treated in Chapter 2). This is almost a definitive word of Tacitus' disaster narrative. So the Romans' use of *clades* in 1.50 to describe *both* past Republican battles *and* the series of future battles in the year 69 seems to betray an awareness that Roman history is playing out like a succession of endlessly repeatable disasters. Otho and Vitellius, and then the victor and Vespasian, will now fill the roles of Caesar and Pompey, of Caesar Augustus and Brutus.

However, things in 69 are, of course, worse. As I noted above, the Romans' remembrance of the civil warriors of the Republic as *boni* is seriously flawed.

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[84] See esp. 1.66, of Valens, and 1.67, of Caecina. See also e.g. 2.84, the description of Vespasian's and Mucianus' activities in the East (with the discussion by Morgan (1994b) 171–174).

But their reading of a decline in leadership (note the sarcasm in *nunc pro Othone an pro Vitellio in templa ituros* at 1.50.3) is perfectly in keeping with Tacitus' own presentation of civil war as repetitive, but regressively so.

Pharsaliam Philippos

Amid the Romans' recollections in 1.50 is a pair of words that, I think, reveals much about their response—and, in turn, the external reader's appropriate response—to civil war. A central claim of this book is that Tacitus' manner of composition in the *Histories* shares with epic poetry the continued use of the trope of repetition, and that the repetitive program of the work is deepened by Tacitus' persistent, constructive engagement with Virgil and Lucan. In 1.50—as we have seen, an important passage on the thematic repetitiveness of the *Histories*—there is also among the Romans' remembrances a specific allusion to the Virgilian and Lucanian conceptions of repetitive civil war.

The Romans' list of past civil-war battle sites reads: *Pharsaliam Philippos et Perusiam ac Mutinam* (1.50.2). Readers of this passage have long speculated about why Tacitus lists the sites in this way, out of chronological order (Mutina occurred in 43 BCE, before Philippi). It has been suggested that the ordering is on geographical grounds (the first two sites in Greece, the latter two in Italy), for phonetic reasons, or based on the type of conflict ("the first two recall battles only, the second two sieges as well as campaigns").[85] Commentators have also noted the peculiarity of Tacitus' use of conjunctions here, an asyndeton followed by two conjunctive pairings.[86]

I think that the fronting and juxtaposition of Pharsalia and Philippi, in an asyndeton, carry great meaning here in 1.50, since the identification

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[85] Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc. summarizes the arguments: Andresen (which I have not seen) argues for grouping on geographical grounds, Wolff (1886) ad loc. on phonetic grounds ("aus Rücksicht auf den Wohllaut"), and Irvine (1952) ad loc. from the type of conflict. The quotation above is from Irvine. Heraeus (1904) ad loc. attributes the pairing of Pharsalia and Philippi here to "leicht ersichtlichen inneren Gründen." Heubner himself suggests that the scattered word order works to convey the emotional response of the worried Romans, with Pharsalus and Philippi foremost in their consciousness. Ash (2010a) 122 suggests that Tacitus has made the Romans place the reference to Mutina, somewhat of a disreputable victory for Augustus (see *Ann.* 1.10.2), last "precisely to prompt readers to analyze it more closely." See also note 90 below for a recent suggestion by Damon (2010b).

[86] Heubner (1963–1982), Chilver (1979), and Damon (2003) ad loc. compare the series *quaestore aedili tribuno ac praetore et consule* at *Ann.* 12.64.1. See Draeger (1882) 54–58 for a catalogue of the different types of asyndeton in Tacitus.

and even conflation of these two notorious battles had taken on a rich significance in the poetry of the early empire. This begins with Virgil, who, during his lament at *Georgics* 1.465–514 of the civil strife that resulted from Julius Caesar's assassination, writes, at 1.489–492:

> ergo inter sese paribus concurrere telis
> Romanas acies iterum uidere Philippi;
> nec fuit indignum superis bis sanguine nostro
> Emathiam et latos Haemi pinguescere campos.
>
> So Philippi saw again Roman battle lines colliding with each other, with matching weapons. And it did not seem inappropriate to the gods above for Emathia and the broad plains of Haemus to grow fertile twice with our blood.

Virgil makes Philippi, the site in Macedonia of the victory of Antony and Octavian over Brutus and Cassius in 42 BCE, "see again" civil conflict, implying that the earlier Battle of Pharsalus (actually some 150 miles south down the Aegean shoreline in Thessaly) took place in the very same location.[87] Philippi thus becomes a sad reenactment of Pharsalus, and Rome appears to repeat its act of self-destruction. Virgil's conflation of Pharsalus and Philippi was instantly embraced, and given further emphasis, by his successors. In *Metamorphoses* 15 Ovid's Jupiter declares, in the wake of Caesar's assassination, that Octavian will get vengeance and that "Pharsalia shall experience him, and Emathian Philippi will again become moist with blood" (15.823–824: *Pharsalia sentiet illum | Emathiique iterum madefient caede Philippi*). Manilius writes similarly of the "barely dry" (*uixque etiam sicca … harena*) sands of Philippi at *Astronomica* 1.910. Statius too merges the two sites, in a poem dedicated to the memory of Lucan.[88]

Statius' dedication is fitting, because it is Lucan who adopts the fusion of these two battle sites on the grandest scale. At several points in the *Bellum Civile* (1.680, 6.582, 7.872 [the last line of Book 7], 9.271) he flatly calls the location of the final battle between Caesar and Pompey *Philippi*, which *prima facie* looks clumsy and even needlessly confusing. But Lucan's

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87 Servius on *Geo.* 1.490 glosses *iterum uidere Philippi* with this explanation. Cartault (1899) argues that Virgil here refers to the two engagements at Philippi in 42, the first indecisive, and the second (three weeks later) the familiar, decisive confrontation. On this issue Hill (2000) on *Met.* 15.824 writes: "Whatever the truth may be about Virgil, it is clear that his poetic successors, including Ovid here, took Virgil's passage to be a license to identify Pharsalus and Philippi." See also Ahl (1976) 314–315 and Mynors (1990) on *Geo.* 1.489–490 on the development of this identification. Nelis (2010) is a recent discussion of the wordplay in the *Geo.* passage, with a full bibliography.

88 Stat. *Silv.* 2.7.65–66: *albos ossibus Italis Philippos | et Pharsalica bella detonabis.*

poem is not about just the conflict at Pharsalus; its subject is Roman civil war generally, with the Battle of Pharsalus, together with its buildup and immediate aftermath, as a case in point. The incidence of Philippi, to Lucan most emphatically as well as to so many other authors writing after Virgil, served as the perfect demonstration of Rome's pattern of repetitive self-destructiveness, as this battle took place so soon after and so geographically close to Pharsalus. Lucan's most developed deployment of this conflation comes at 1.678–694, where his raving prophetess foretells five upcoming events, the battles of Pharsalus (which she calls *Philippi* at 1.680), Thapsus, and Munda, the assassination of Caesar, and finally the battle of Philippi. Her concluding words, addressed to her source of inspiration Phoebus, capture strikingly the frustrations of Roman civil war: *noua da mihi cernere litora ponti | telluremque nouam; uidi iam, Phoebe, Philippos* (1.693–694: "Allow me to behold new seashores and a new land: Philippi, Phoebus, I have already seen"). The reference is to Philippi, the last stop on her vatic tour of the years 48 to 42 BCE. But the prophetess complains that she already saw Philippi, i.e. at the battle of Pharsalus. Through the character of the forward- and then backward-looking prophetess, Lucan can underscore with great effectiveness the point that Rome had seen this all before.[89]

And the Romans of *Histories* 1.50 saw it all again in the year 69. Given the rich and resonant life that the conflation of Pharsalia and Philippi had assumed in the literature of the early empire, I do not think it too bold to propose that Tacitus has made the Romans of *Histories* 1.50 refer to that conflation with the fronted, asyndetic pair *Pharsaliam Philippos*.[90] A remembrance of the elision of those battles strikes the perfect chord in this chapter, in which these Romans dwell on and articulate so evocatively the repetitiveness of civil war. When they recall *Pharsaliam Philippos*—that is, the assimilating repetition of Pharsalia at Philippi—they relate the

89 Also conflating the two sites, and perhaps reflecting the influence of Lucan in doing so, are Florus, who refers to the Battle of Pharsalus as being fought "in the fields of Philippi" (*Philippicis campis*, 2.13.43), and Petronius, whose mini "Bellum Civile" includes mention of "the fields of Philippi, already strewn with twin deaths" (*gemina iam stratos morte Philippos*, *Sat.* 121.111). On Florus as a frequent user of Lucanian language, see note 136 below; and on Petronius' "Bellum Civile" as a response to Lucan's, see note 13 above. In a reversal of what Florus does, Juvenal refers to Octavian's victory at Philippi as happening "in the fields of Thessaly" (*Thessaliae campis*, 8.242).

90 Paratore (1951) 354–355 n. 21 and Damon (2010b) 378–379 have also suggested that with the (achronological) juxtaposition of Perugia and Mutina here Tacitus is recalling *BC* 1.41, from one of Lucan's enumerations of civil-war battle sites: *Perusina fames Mutinaeque labores*. "Is Tacitus suggesting that these Romans of 69 CE have read their Lucan and realized that the grim story he told continued after his death?" asks Damon at 378.

commentary inherent in that conflation to their own civil wars. And when Tacitus places this pair into their recollections, he knows that the repetition of Pharsalia / Philippi will itself be repeated and extended into their time in the form of the doublet Battles of Cremona that loom for them and for the reader. It is surely significant that, just before Cremona I, Tacitus himself invokes these two battles during his digression on, appropriately, the sameness / repetitiveness of civil war (2.37–38).[91]

Furthermore, the fact that the Romans of 1.50 are recalling the *literary* conflation of Pharsalia and Philippi is marked, I suggest, by the phrase that Tacitus uses earlier in this sentence to describe their act of recollection: *repetita bellorum ciuilium memoria* (1.50.2). Each of the civil-war events and battles that the Romans of 69 CE recall here is from over a century earlier. So the *memoria* recalled here is not from autopsy, but from oral tradition, and from literature. This sense of *memoria*, as "the literature that preserves memory," is common, and used often by Tacitus.[92] And it is perfectly appropriate here: the full phrase *repetita bellorum ciuilium memoria* is serving as a metatextual marker that the Romans are here engaging with the literary tradition of civil war, and that we the readers should join them in the act. The specifically literary provenance of their recollections may be demonstrated by the inclusion of the phrase *uastitatem Italiae* (1.50.2), which Cicero, Asinius Pollio, Sallust, and Livy use to describe past civil and foreign devastations of Italy.[93] The appearance of that phrase here may

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91 See my discussion below in this chapter. Whereas Ash (2010a) 125–126 contrasts Tacitus' identification of the samness of civil war in 2.38 with the views of the Romans of 1.50, my argument is that these model Romans, in spite of their sentimentalizing of past leaders (1.50.3), also have an acute sense of the repetitiveness of civil war.

92 This is *OLD* 8 ("tradition preserved in writing or other form, a memorial, a record"). *TLL* 8.675.59–676.36 lists passages in which *memoria* is used *de traditione historica*, including examples from Tacitus at *Agr.* 1.2, *Germ.* 2.2, *Hist.* 2.3.1, *Ann.* 4.34.4, 4.43.1, 6.28.4, and 11.14.1. No reference work that I have seen considers the instance of *memoria* at *Hist.* 1.50.2 to have this sense, as I do here. On *historia* as *memoria*, see also Walter (2004) 212–356 (a reading of the poets and historians of the Republic as recorders of *memoria*), Krebs (2009) 98–101, and Gowing (2005) 7–15, who writes of "the explicit connection Romans themselves made between *memoria* and *historia*" (9). He discusses *historia*'s freedom from generic restrictions, with a helpful survey of ancient sources' coverage of the topic (e.g., Cicero's definition of *historia* as the *uita memoriae*, at *De or.* 2.36).

93 See Pollio's use of the phrase at Cicero, *Fam.* 10.33.1, Cicero's own use at *Sest.* 12, and similar expressions at *Att.* 9.10.3, *Cat.* 1.29 and 4.2, and *Fam.* 10.15.4; Sallust, *BJ* 5.2, of the *uastitas Italiae* resulting from civil war; and Livy, 21.22.8–9, where the phrase appears in a dream of Hannibal's about his imminent success in Italy. Of the phrase's use in the late Republic Schmalz (1890) 50 concludes: "Zur Zeit der Bürgerkriege scheint vastitas Italiae und Italiam vastare … eine Art politischen Schlagworts geworden zu sein." Damon (2003) on 1.50.2 also writes of the currency of this "much used phrase."

reflect the Romans' understanding, gained from literature, of these wars as a messy mixture of internecine conflict and foreign invasion.[94]

The Romans' retrospection to the *uastitatem Italiae* is also, as I discussed above, *prospective*, in that this and the other remembrances in this line look meaningfully ahead to their repetitions in the later narrative of the *Histories*. The phrase *Pharsaliam Philippos* operates in this same forward-looking way: the Romans Tacitus has crafted remember this literary conflation, and relate its inherent commentary to the Pharsalias and Philippis of *their* time, the battles and bloodshed that are to be repeated, assimilated, conflated, and escalated throughout the *Histories*, their grip on Roman history growing frustratingly tighter. In this sense, then, *Histories* 1.50 acts as a sort of *mise en abyme*, with the Romans' acts of literary recollection mirroring what Tacitus does in the surrounding text. Their remembrance of "*Pharsaliam Philippos*," an assimilation first exercised by Virgil and then elaborated over an entire epic by Lucan, reflects Tacitus' own engagement with these authors, and in particular his embrace of their meditations on repetitive Roman civil war.

Moreover, if Tacitus is calling to mind Lucan's "*Pharsaliam Philippos*," then it is noteworthy that he does so by means of narrative device that Lucan employed to great effect at *BC* 2.67–233.[95] There, just as Caesar has crossed the Rubicon and is marching on Rome, the poet crafts an old man who remembers with great detail and horror Marius' return from exile in 87 BCE and the resulting massacre at Rome (2.67–133), and then Sulla's return from the East in 83 and ensuing purge of his Italian and Roman enemies (2.134–220). This speech is the longest in the poem, and throughout it the reader cannot help but think of the parallel figures from the *Bellum Civile*'s main narrative, Caesar and Pompey, who thus come to look like doubles of the civil warriors from the previous generation.[96] The chief distinction,

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[94] Later on, their contention that "the one thing that you would know from their war was that the victor would end up being the worse of the two" (1.50.3: *bello solum id scires, deteriorem fore qui uicisset*) may be informed by their reading of a similar *sententia* from Seneca at *Ep*. 14.13, on the domination that was certain to result from the war between Pompey and Caesar: *potest melior uincere, non potest non peior esse qui uicerit* ("The better man may prevail, but the one who prevails is not able to not be worse"). Heubner (1963–1982) and Damon (2003) ad loc. compare the two passages. As Heubner notes, Cicero makes a similar point, though much less succinctly than Seneca and Tacitus, at *Har. resp*. 54.

[95] Chilver (1979) 110 notes in brief the similarity between the two passages.

[96] See Roche (2009) 17–18. And see Fantham (1992) 90–93 on the organization and thematic unity of *BC* 2.67–233, and Bartsch (1997) 88–89 on the recurrence of unfavorable comparisons with Sulla throughout the *BC*.

however, is that the latest generation is more covetous than Marius and Sulla, more power-hungry, worse (2.227–232). Lucan's passage, then, just like *Histories* 1.50, offers a striking meditation on the degenerative repetitiveness of Roman civil war. When Tacitus has his Romans relate "*Pharsaliam Philippos*" to the wars of his text, is he also activating the memory of the similar comparative act by Lucan's old man? If so, then the allusion serves as another means of expanding the continuum of civil war reflected upon here (Marius and Sulla → Caesar and Pompey → Otho and Vitellius → the winner and Vespasian, and beyond), and giving his wars deeper and greater roots.

And let us recall that, while being informative about the author's allusive and creative processes, this passage also has a lot to say to and about the *Histories*' readers. Above I discussed how the Romans' fear (recall *trepidam, pauentem, exterruit*, and *horrebant*) in 1.50 is part of their model response to civil war, as is their identification of civil war's repetitive patterns. Another essential part of their response is the recollection of literature: in order to make sense of the civil war of their times, they engage in a repetitive act of their own: *repetita ciuilium bellorum memoria*.[97] Shortly afterwards in this chapter Tacitus has his Romans point directly to "you," that is, the Roman reader, with their use of the second person form *scires* at 1.50.3.[98] I think that this whole passage works in precisely this inviting way. Tacitus' internal readers point out to the external readers, and guide them in their response to civil war, bidding them to observe and learn from civil war's patterns—and to do so through the reading of literature.

A Proem in the Middle

A sort of companion passage to 1.50, and one that is of great importance for understanding Tacitus' thematic and literary aims in his civil-war narrative, is *Histories* 2.37–38. Here the historian digresses from his account of the war between Otho and Vitellius, whose forces are about to meet at the first

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97 This, the fact that Tacitus' Romans recall literary *memoria* while Lucan's old man recalls from autopsy, is a meaningful difference between the "civil war recollection" scenes at *Hist.* 1.50 and *BC* 2.67–233.

98 On Tacitus' use of the second person singular to reach out to the reader, see Sinclair (1995) 50–51 (on *Hist.* 1.1) and 60–62 (on *Ann.* 4.33) and Pelling (2009) 154. Gilmartin (1975) surveys the use of the second person singular in Roman historians. At 103 she writes: "Since an historical narrative relates the past to the present, the use of the second person can be one means of moving effectively back and forth between the two."

Battle of Cremona. This digression is "the one major personal entry in the *Histories*,"[99] and Tacitus marks it off well, with the first-person forms *inuenio*, the first word of 2.37, and then *uenio*, the last word of 2.38.[100] His use of the first-person pronoun *ego* at 2.37.2 is similarly conspicuous; Tacitus writes this word *in sua persona* just one other time in the *Histories*.[101]

It is clear that Tacitus is commanding our attention to this digression, and particularly to the *personal* views that he articulates in it. Comparison with another device of the Latin poet may be profitable for our understanding of the digression. Gian Biagio Conte and Richard Thomas have discussed the phenomenon of the "proem in the middle" in Latin poetry: a second proem, placed at the center of a work, which the author employs for the declaration of his literary aims.[102] Whereas the proem at the outset of a work outlines the *quid* of what follows, the proem in the middle focuses more on the *quale*.[103] The device can be traced back to the opening of Ennius, *Annales* 7 (Skutsch fragments 206–212), and is embraced by Virgil (*Eclogues* 6.1–7, *Georgics* 3.3–22, *Aeneid* 7.37–45) and other Latin poets (e.g. Lucretius, 4.1–25, and Propertius, 3.1.1–4). *Histories* 2.37–38 is, like these passages, medially placed, coming right at the midpoint of Tacitus' account of the year 69. If we count pages, it falls nearly halfway through Books 1–3; and here the forces of Otho, the second of the four emperors that year, are about to fall to the forces of Vitellius, the third. And, as we shall see, Tacitus highlights here in very direct ways the literary *qualitas* of this work.

Tacitus begins the digression with an explicit assertion of the primacy of *his* narrative and *his* understanding of the civil wars, as opposed to the accounts and explanations of less discerning authors. He confronts the report found in certain authors (*inuenio apud quosdam auctores*) that the Othonian and Vitellian armies tried to forge a truce before the first Battle of Cremona, and may even have considered referring the choice of an emperor to the senate (2.37.1). This possibility he quickly shoots down: neither the common soldiers, driven by war-lust, nor their leaders, who would accept only emperors as guilty of crime as themselves, would entertain such a call for peace and compromise (2.37.2). Evidence of the historical tradition against which Tacitus inveighs in this passage (the "certain authors") is the

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99 Williams (1978) 239 (cited by Ash (1999) 194 n. 44).

100 When he makes his return to the narrative proper: *nunc ad rerum ordinem uenio*, 2.38.2.

101 I thank Melanie Marshall for this point.

102 Conte (1992) and Thomas (1999) 101–113.

103 Conte (1992) 149. At 150–151 he contrasts e.g. the *quid* of Virgil, *Georg*. 1.1–5, with the *quale* of *Georg*. 3.3–22.

account by Plutarch, who was working from the same source as Tacitus, and thus may reflect the opinions of their shared source. At *Otho* 9.4 the biographer considers the likelihood of a meeting between the Othonian and Vitellian armies:

> καὶ οὐκ ἀπεικός ἐστι, μηδετέρου τότε τῶν προσαγορευομένων αὐτοκρατόρων εὐδοκιμοῦντος, ἐπιπίπτειν τοιούτους διαλογισμοὺς τοῖς γνησίοις καὶ διαπόνοις καὶ σωφρονοῦσι τῶν στρατιωτῶν, ὡς ἔχθιστον εἴη καὶ δεινόν, ἃ πάλαι διὰ Σύλλαν καὶ Μάριον, εἶτα Καίσαρα καὶ Πομπήιον ᾠκτείροντο δρῶντες ἀλλήλους καὶ πάσχοντες οἱ πολῖται, ταῦτα νῦν ὑπομένειν ἢ Οὐιτελλίῳ λαιμαργίας καὶ οἰνοφλυγίας ἢ τρυφῆς καὶ ἀκολασίας Ὄθωνι τὴν ἡγεμονίαν χορήγημα προθεμένους.
>
> And, since neither of the men then called emperor was of good repute, it is not unlikely that among the legitimate and experienced and sensible soldiers there were conversations, that it would be a most hateful and dreadful thing if what the citizens regretted doing to one another and suffering long ago—because of Sulla and Marius, and then Caesar and Pompey—they endured again now, only to make supreme power a means for the gluttony and drunkenness of Vitellius or the luxuriousness and immoderation of Otho.

The impulse for compromise and settlement among the soldiers that Plutarch deems likely is explicitly rejected by Tacitus in 2.37. Tacitus in fact does very different things with the material on past civil wars that clearly existed in the authors' shared source.[104] Plutarch has the soldiers regretfully recall the self-destruction of prior civil wars, and express a desire not to repeat this past suffering. Tacitus chooses to treat this retrospective material in his own voice. Just after his condemnation of all ranks of combatants in these civil wars (2.37.2), the historian offers an expanded reflection on the causes of Roman civil war, in 2.38:

> [1] uetus ac iam pridem insita mortalibus potentiae cupido cum imperii magnitudine adoleuit erupitque; nam rebus modicis aequalitas facile habebatur. sed, ubi subacto orbe et aemulis urbibus regibusue excisis securas opes concupiscere uacuum fuit, prima inter patres plebemque certamina exarsere. modo turbulenti tribuni, modo consules praeualidi, et in urbe ac foro temptamenta ciuilium bellorum; mox e plebe infima C. Marius et nobilium saeuissimus Lucius Sulla uictam armis libertatem in dominationem verterunt. post quos Cn. Pompeius occultior non melior, et numquam postea nisi de principatu quaesitum. [2] non discessere ab armis in Pharsalia ac Philippis ciuium legiones, nedum Othonis ac Vitellii exercitus sponte posituri bellum fuerint: eadem illos deum ira, eadem hominum rabies, eaedem scelerum causae in discordiam egere.

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[104] On these differences see further Ash (2007a) 176–177. See also the discussion by McCulloch (1991) 2937–2938.

> The lust for power, old and already long ingrained in mortals, with the expansion of the empire grew and then erupted. For, when resources were modest, equality was easily maintained. But once the world was conquered and rival cities and kings were wiped out, and there was leisure to lust for wealth safely, the first contests between the patricians and the plebs caught fire. At one time the tribunes were disruptive, then the consuls prevailed, and in the city and forum were the trial-runs for the civil wars. Soon Gaius Marius, from the lowest of the plebs, and Lucius Sulla, the most savage of the nobles, turned the liberty they had overthrown into domination. After them Gnaeus Pompey was more secretive, though no better, and never afterwards was there a contest except for the principate. [2] The legions of citizens did not let up from battle at Pharsalia and Philippi, still less were the armies of Otho and Vitellius about to put off war voluntarily: the same anger of the gods, the same madness of humans, the same causes of crime drove them into discord.

We see that Tacitus puts Marius, Sulla, and Pompey to very different use than Plutarch's contemplative soldiers do at *Otho* 9.4. For Tacitus they are earlier demonstrations of Roman power-lust, the very same force that drove the combatants in his civil wars. And, while in Plutarch's telling there is a flicker of caution and pause, and of the possibility of learning and retreating from the behavior of the past, Tacitus brings up these past civil wars only to note the fundamental *sameness* of what happened in the year 69. The unwillingness to cede at Pharsalia and Philippi recurred at Cremona, Rome, and elsewhere in these civil wars. This—the sameness of Roman civil war—is the point of Tacitus' digression, as the climactic tricolon *eadem … eadem … eaedem* at 2.38.2 powerfully conveys.[105]

The emphasis on this theme here in his "proem in the middle" is significant: by underscoring the sameness of civil war in this conspicuous, and conspicuously placed, authorial statement, Tacitus encourages us to look for it across his narrative. Most immediately, as we shall see in Chapter 3, the fighting at Cremona I described in the ensuing chapters (2.39–45) finds striking repetitions in that battle's sequel, Cremona II, which is narrated at 3.15–34. But those iterative battles are not at all unique in the narrative of the *Histories*. As Tacitus announces here, sameness/repetition is central to his understanding of Roman civil war; it is also, accordingly, an underlying *literary* quality of his presentation of Roman civil war.

The digression is, then, a manifesto for his civil-war narrative. And here, just as in the table of contents at 1.2 and in the general statement about

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105 "History for Tacitus is perpetual repetition; every beginning a beginning again," writes Cole (1992) 243, with reference to this line. O'Gorman (1995) 119 and Ash (1999) 82 and (2010a) 125–126 (see note 91 above) also discuss the thematic significance of this line.

his writing at *Annals* 4.32, Tacitus presents himself as an author writing in both the historiographical and the epic traditions, and indeed as one who is creatively fusing the two genres. The representative of the historiographical tradition to whom Tacitus directly refers in this "proem in the middle" is Sallust. The reflection in 2.38.1 on the power-lust that burst out after Rome's elimination of foreign enemies is directly indebted, in both its train of thought and its diction,[106] to Sallust's extensive explorations of this topic in *Bellum Catilinae* 10, *Bellum Iugurthinum* 41–42, and *Histories* 1.12. By holding up the reading and understanding of his famously probing and critical forerunner here, Tacitus corroborates the claims he makes in 2.37 of being a discerning, authoritative historian. And by incorporating here Sallust's theory that the removal of the fear of foreign enemies was a principal cause of the outbreak of power-lust, and thus of civil war, Tacitus establishes that he, like Sallust and all in the Polybian historiographical tradition, is a *bona fide* inquirer of historical causes.[107]

But Tacitus also points to other, less rational *causae* in 2.38. In his impassioned blaming of "the same anger of the gods, the same madness of humans, the same causes of crime" (2.38.2: *eadem illos deum ira, eadem hominum rabies, eaedem scelerum causae*) for Rome's civil wars, it is not the deductive processes of the historian but the explanatory strategies of Virgil and, to a greater degree, Lucan that Tacitus appears to hold up. The embrace of Lucan in fact appears to be anticipated in the digression's preceding lines, where Tacitus integrates and builds upon, alongside the Sallustian language, diction from *Bellum Civile* 1.158–182, Lucan's own brisk account of the collapse of Republican order.[108] And the battles with which the his-

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106 Note esp. that the phrase **subacto** *orbe et* **aemulis** *urbibus* **regibus***ue excisis* is a compressed adaptation of *BC* 10.1 (**reges** *magni bello domiti, nationes ferae et populi ingentes ui* **subacti**, *Carthago* **aemula** *imperi Romani ab stirpe interiit*); and that *uacuum fuit* recalls Sallust's use of this phrase in the same context at *Hist.* 1.12. See further Ash's discussion of the Sallustian imagery in 2.38 at (2007a) 25 and 180–181 and (2010a) 125.

107 As Ash (2010a) 131 n. 26 notes, Tacitus also refers to his exposition of *causae* at *Hist.* 1.4.1 (when giving the reasons for including the catalogue of 1.4–11; see above in this chapter), 1.51.1, and 2.1.1. On 1.4.1 as a link back to the Polybian tradition, see Damon (2003) ad loc. Polybius articulates his interest in the presentation of beginnings (ἀρχαί), causes (αἰτίαι), and pretexts (προσφάσεις) in *Hist.* 3.6. On this scheme and its limitations in practice, see Walbank (1972) 157–160. And on Polybius' influence at Rome (and Roman culture's influence on him), see Davidson (2009), with further bibliography.

108 The clause *ubi* **subacto orbe** *et aemulis urbibus regibusue excisis securas* **opes** *concupiscere uacuum fuit* appears to draw diction not just from Sallust (see the previous note), but also from *BC* 1.160 (**opes** *nimias* **mundo** *fortuna* **subacto** | *intulit*). And Tacitus' words *modo turbulenti tribuni, modo consules praeualidi* (2.38.1) may be an emulative adaptation of *BC* 1.177

torian explicitly compares his own at 2.38.2 are Pharsalia, the main event of Lucan's poem, and Philippi, the misnomer that, as we have seen, Lucan meaningfully applies to Pharsalia throughout the *Bellum Civile*. Here, then, Tacitus suggests the same analogy of "*Pharsaliam Philippos*" to the repetitive fighting of 69 that the Romans of 1.50 hold up.

So I would suggest that the referent of the repeated adjective *eadem* in the phrases at 2.38.2 is not just earlier Roman civil war, in particular the battles of Pharsalia and Philippi, but also the author of Pharsalia and Philippi, the epic poet who, building upon Virgil, highlighted so memorably the anger of the gods and madness of humans in civil war. In the remainder of this chapter I will look at how Tacitus employs these forces in the surrounding narrative of the *Histories*, and at the pointed *sameness* of this approach, that is how his handling of divine anger and human madness emerges as an emulative continuation of the strategies of Virgil and, most of all, Lucan.

"The Same Anger of the Gods"

Readers of the *Histories* and *Annals* have long regarded phrases such as *ira deum* in Tacitus as "nothing more than devices of style, calculated to enhance his presentation of particular scenes and serving as convenient ways of expressing pathos and indignation."[109] Tacitus' use of such phrases, as well as terms like *fatum* and *fors*, is indeed erratic, and is determined most of all by the terms' value to a given context in his narrative.[110] So, Tacitus can

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(*et cum consulibus turbantes iura tribuni*). Each author faults equally the consuls and tribunes for the Republic's troubles, but Tacitus' *turbulenti tribuni*, in which the tribunes themselves become "full of commotion," reads like an even more taut, more arresting take on Lucan's image. Burck (1971) 43–44 and 52 also compares Tacitus' assertions about *causae* in 2.38 to similar appeals by Lucan.

[109] Goodyear (1972) on *Ann.* 1.39.6, quoted by Martin and Woodman (1989) on *Ann.* 4.1.2, Damon (2003) on *Hist.* 1.3.2, Ash (2007) on *Hist.* 2.38.2, and Griffin (2009) 172.

[110] Griffin's (2009) 168–172 efforts to pin down a Tacitean "philosophy of history" lead her to conclude only that "Tacitus was consistent neither in adhering to any one metaphysical explanation for events (divine intervention, inexorable fate, astral determinism, random chance) nor in regarding portents and prodigies as reliable indicators of any one of these or, at times, as being of any real significance at all. On each occasion, Tacitus invokes the explanation that produces the effect he wants." And at 172: "He is clearly not a systematic thinker when it comes to natural philosophy. Mood prevails over analysis." Burck (1971) 55–59, while identifying the difficulty of pinning down a guiding principle across Tacitus' works, sees hostility as the predominant divine stance across the *Hist.* and *Ann.* Davies (2004) 143–225 attempts to see consistency and a type of teleological order in Tacitus' presentation of Rome's relationship with the gods. But his argument that Tacitus' narrative in the

be reserved, skeptical, or downright dismissive when considering matters of the divine. But he can also incorporate the gods and react to them with great emotion—if that is what the material calls for, if that is the "local effect" he desires.[111] The civil wars of 69 seem to have been just the topic that merited a passionate engagement with the gods from Tacitus. For, in three of the *Histories*' most prominent passages—in the table of contents at 1.3.2, here in the "proem in the middle" at 2.38.2, and then in his personal response to the burning of the Capitol at 3.72.1—Tacitus points, with great emotion and in his own voice, to divine malevolence as a factor behind these civil wars.

At 1.3.2 Tacitus gives divine disfavor pride of place in his table of contents. After listing the myriad disasters (1.2.1–3) and portents (1.3.2) that await his reader, he concludes the introductory passage by writing:

> nec enim umquam atrocioribus populi Romani cladibus magisue iustis indiciis adprobatum est non esse curae deis securitatem nostram, esse ultionem.
>
> For, never by darker disasters of the Roman people or by clearer signs was it proved that our safety was not a concern for the gods, but our punishment.

This early and unforgettable line invites us to read the disasters that follow in Tacitus' narrative as acts of divine punishment, as the results of the gods' displeasure with Rome. Behind the *atrociores clades* of the *Histories*, behind this *opus … atrox proeliis* (1.2.1), is the gods' anger at Rome. What is more, this narrative will give us divine punishment at its most extreme: never before (*nec umquam*) has it been this bad.[112] This impassioned "blaming" of the gods is repeated at 2.38.2, where, as we have seen, he includes *eadem deum ira* in his rapid-fire list of factors behind Roman *discordia*. And then, in what is perhaps the most emotional passage in the *Histories*,[113] Tacitus writes

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Hist. and *Ann.* moves, like Livy's, towards restoration of the *pax deum* runs into problems in the assertion that the Flavians "are 'chosen' as appropriate vehicles of the coming regeneration" (220). This requires the relegation of Domitian to the role of "aberration" (151; see also 220); Davies neglects entirely the Domitian who emerges in *Hist.* 3–4 (see my Epilogue) and is presented in his full monstrousness at *Agr.* 1–3 and 39–45.

111 This is the term used by Hutchinson (1993) 250, who, in his balanced discussion of the divine in Tacitus (239–250), notes that "despite Tacitus' normal reserve over asserting the action of the divine, there are occasions when he seems to assert it unreservedly. The rupture is real and intentional: from so aloof an author such moments arrest and impress" (244). Such "ruptures" are harder to find in Livy, whose way of distancing himself from the religious matters he presents is discussed by Levene (1993), Fantham (2003) 233–235, Davies (2004) 51–61, and Feeney (2007) 138–140.

112 Hutchinson (1993) 245 writes of how "most uncharacteristically emotion and style have poured in flood" into this passage.

113 Note e.g. the fronted superlatives *luctuosissimum* and *foedissimum*, and the rhetorical questions *quibus armorum causis? quo tantae cladis pretio?* I return to this passage in Chap-

that the burning of the Capitol happened "with favorable gods—if only our behavior had allowed" (*propitiis, si per mores nostros liceret, deis*, 3.72.1). The gods, then, were willing to smile upon Rome, but Roman conduct (*mores nostros*) did not allow them to do so.[114] So, what Rome receives from the gods in the *Histories* is the opposite of their favor: their *hostility*.

While the conceit of divine anger towards Rome is by no means ubiquitous in the *Histories*, it is surely significant that Tacitus incorporates it into these three purple passages (1.3.2, 2.38.2, 3.72.1) and, as I will suggest in the coming chapters, at a few other key points in his civil-war narrative. And the *particular* appropriateness of *ira deum* to a civil-war narrative may be demonstrated by a telling passage in *Histories* 4. At. 4.25–26 Tacitus details the grievances of the mutinous legions serving on the Rhine under Hordeonius Flaccus and Dillius Vocula, who are at war with the Batavian rebel Julius Civilis. Tacitus describes the legionaries as having *discordes animos* ("divided spirits," 4.26.1). With this phrase he marks the disagreements among the troops, and also signals that he is casting this mutiny as an act of *discordia*, a civil war in miniature.[115] Aggravating the soldiers' discontent was a drought, which was making the Rhine difficult to navigate and the grain supply low. At 4.26.2 we read of the reaction of some to the drought:

> apud imperitos prodigii loco accipiebatur ipsa aquarum penuria, tamquam nos amnes quoque et uetera imperii munimenta desererent: quod in pace fors seu natura, tunc fatum et ira dei uocabatur.
>
> Among the ignorant, the lack of water itself was taken as a prodigy, as though the rivers, the old defenses of the empire, were deserting us: what in peace was called chance or nature, then was being called fate and the anger of the god.

The *deus* referred to specifically here is the river god of the Rhine. And the "then" (*tunc*) in Tacitus' *sententia* is the period of *discordia* brought on by the mutiny. So he is telling us that, in times of *discordia*, the ignorant (*imperiti*)

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ter 3. Of it Hutchinson (1993) 246 writes: "the unusual nature of the passage, and its emotional force, are plain."

[114] Of the particulars of Rome's moral decline, Davies (2004) 208 writes: "'*Mores*' [at 3.72.1] succinctly leaves open the question of specific referents and cannot be restricted to cult practice, though it should include it." To this end, he writes, at 204: "Under the emperors, Rome abandons its vigilance [to its relationship with the gods], and the *ira deum* grows even more profound."

[115] As often of mutinies: see also e.g. the evocative language at *Hist.* 3.10–11 and throughout *Ann.* 1.16–52.

give *fatum* or *ira dei* as explanations for naturally occurring events, while in peacetime chance and nature suffice as explanations. The knowing, rational historian, it appears, is exposing the superstitions of the *imperiti* that emerge in times of civil strife. But recourse to the *ira deum* for an explanation of events is of course *precisely* what Tacitus himself does for his civil wars. The disparity between what we are told at 4.26.2 and what we read at 1.3.2, 2.38.2, and 3.72.1 is revealing. Tacitus the discerning student of human character is fully aware of the tendency, during civil strife, to attribute natural phenomena to divine anger.[116] So Tacitus the literary artist engages in this exercise when writing his civil wars. In his narratorial grasping for explanations for these wars, he blames the gods, upbraids them for the severity of this punishment—because *this is what people do during times of civil strife*. This lashing out at the *ira deum* is a vital textual stroke for capturing the confusion and inexplicability of civil war.[117]

Tacitus' impassioned blaming of the gods' anger for the civil wars and the elevation of their anger to a causative force in his narrative sound very much like authorial exclamations that we hear in prominent passages in Roman epic. Virgil, after stating at *Aeneid* 1.4 and 8–11 that the mindful anger of Juno (*memorem Iunonis ... iram*, 1.4) will generate much of the action in his poem, famously complains at 1.11: *tantaene animis caelestibus irae*? ("Are the angers in the gods' hearts so great?").[118] This lament has a bookend near the poem's conclusion, when the still troubled narrator asks Jupiter about the civil war being waged in Latium, at 12.503–504: *tanton placuit concurrere motu,* | *Iuppiter, aeterna gentes in pace futuras*? ("Was it pleasing to you,

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[116] He makes a similar point at *Hist.* 1.86.1, when describing the public's heightened belief in prodigies, as the conflict between Otho and Vitellius drew near: *et plura alia rudibus saeculis etiam in pace obseruata, quae* **nunc tantum in metu** *audiuntur*. As Damon (2003) 278 notes, Cicero makes a comparable observation at *Div.* 2.58.

[117] Feeney's (2007) reading of portents in Tacitus' writing is also applicable to the author's appeals to divine anger as a force behind civil war: "Such episodes are not to be read as evidence of personal skepticism about the interaction of the divine realm with the human, or indeed of personal belief. They are part of a general technique which Tacitus uses to create an unrelieved sensation of high-pitched strain, with a continual dissonance between form and reality: the overall effect of his treatment of religious phenomena is to create a fearful and oppressive atmosphere which does not allow for the rituals of expiation and relief which punctuate the narrative of Livy" (141).

[118] Juno's causative anger has precedent in (along with Achilles' wrath, *Il.* 1.1) Apollo's anger at the Greeks (*Il.* 1.8–12), and Poseidon's hostility towards Odysseus (*Od.* 1.19–21), driving forces in Homer's narratives. Henry (1991) 2995 compares Tacitus' blaming of the gods at *Hist.* 1.3.2 with Virgil's mention of divine anger at *Aen.* 1.11.

Jupiter, that races who would live together in eternal peace should clash in such a great upheaval?").[119]

Lucan is sure to inherit divine anger from Virgil. In fact, this is *all* that he takes from Virgil's divine apparatus: gone from the *Bellum Civile* are divine characters, as well as anything like the providence of Jupiter for Aeneas and the Julian line that exists in the *Aeneid*.[120] Lucan reacts to the divine malevolence that predominates his poem in the same affecting, plaintive way that Virgil does at *Aeneid* 1.11 and 12.503–504. The later poet is, however, more perplexed, and thus more scattered in his complaints about the gods. During his apostrophe over Pharsalus at 7.445–459 he asserts that "in truth, we have no gods" (*sunt nobis nulla profecto* | *numina*, 7.445–446) and then that "no god cares for mortal affairs" (*mortalia nulli* | *sunt curata deo*, 7.454–455). These are the ramblings of a witness to civil war, at a loss for how Pharsalia could have happened.[121] The conclusion he reaches in the rest of the poem is that the gods *must* be out for Rome's destruction. This program becomes clear in the poem's first book.[122] At 1.81–82, during the presentation of the causes of the civil war (1.67–97), he flatly blames the gods for putting a halt to Roman prosperity. Then, when introducing his main characters, Lucan states that the gods favored Caesar (1.128), and so backed his assault on Roman *libertas*; in the previous generation their anger had similarly manifested itself in the support of Marius (2.85–86).[123] Later,

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119 Of the similarities between *Aen.* 1.11 and 12.503–504, Feeney (1991) 154 writes: "The poet's initial stance of incomprehension ... carries through to the end." The destructive powers of divine anger become acutely visible to Aeneas, and to us, towards the end of *Aen.* 2. At 2.602–603 Venus, after restraining her son from further fighting, tells him who is responsible for Troy's ruin: *diuum inclementia, diuum* | *has auertit opes sternitque a culmine Troiam*. Venus then removes the mortal cloud from Aeneas' eyes (2.604–606), and he himself witnesses the gods' destruction of the city: *apparent dirae facies inimicaque Troiae* | *numina magna deum* (2.622–623).

120 On the absence of divine characters from the *BC*, see Ahl (1976) 280–305 and Feeney (1991) 269–285. See Fantham (2003) 241 on Lucan's adaptation of Virgil's divine anger into the *BC*.

121 On the deliberate incongruity of *BC* 7.445–459 with the rest of the poem, see Hutchinson (1993) 253–254. And see Bartsch (1997) 108–114, who considers how the narrator's stance towards the gods is part of the "ideology in cold blood" that Lucan constructs for him: "the epic lets us damn the present and believe in it, damn the loss of ideals (political or religious) and behave as if we still possessed them" (113–114). Behr's (2007) treatment of apostrophe in Lucan addresses this passage at 142–144.

122 See also the statements at 1.510–511, 1.524, 1.617, and 1.649, cited by Fantham (2003) 241 n. 42, who traces divine anger over the remainder of the *BC* at 242–248.

123 *BC* 1.126–128: *quis iustius induit arma* | *scire nefas: magno se iudice quisque tuetur*; | *uictrix causa deis placuit sed uicta Catoni* (see Roche (2009) ad loc. for more demonstrations of this in the poem). And 2.85–86: *non ille fauore* | *numinis, ingenti superum protectus ab ira*.

after concluding Book 1 with a catalogue of portents of Rome's imminent peril (1.522–695), he opens Book 2 with the weighty announcement that "the angers of the gods were now clear" (*iamque irae patuere deum*, 2.1).

A final example of appeal to divine malevolence in Lucan is perhaps most revealing, and closest to what we find in Tacitus' civil wars. Book 4 of the *Bellum Civile* concludes with a long meditation on the death of Curio, the once distinguished and upright politician whom Caesar lured into his party with gold (4.816–824). Curio's death, Lucan exclaims in this passage, was the result of divine vengeance: *felix Roma quidem ciuesque habitura beatos,* | *si libertatis superis tam cura placeret* | *quam uindicta placet* ("Rome would be fortunate, and have happy citizens, if concern for her liberty were as pleasing to the gods as her punishment is to them," 4.807–809). With his death, the despondent Lucan seems to say here, the gods were punishing Curio for his greedy betrayal of Rome and Roman values.

Curio's punishment is what we see on a grand, collective scale in the *Histories*, if the prominently placed statements at 1.3.2, 2.38.2, and 3.72.1 are to mean anything: the decline of Roman *mores* led to the gods' hostility, a hostility manifested in its highest form in the civil wars themselves. The narrative of the *Histories*, then, is, like the events of the *Aeneid* and the *Bellum Civile*, made to be the *product* of divine anger. And as we have seen, just like his epic predecessors, Tacitus responds to this condition from within his narrative, and with bursts of frustrated emotion. This response from Tacitus, in its insistence on the gods' malevolence and corresponding exclusion of any type of providence from the *Histories*' civil wars, also marks, we have seen, an instance of the historian identifying a point of thematic tension between his epic models Virgil and Lucan. Here it is Lucan, the louder, more agitated, more persistent denouncer of the gods, whom Tacitus favors.

But if the causative divine anger of Tacitus' outbursts reads like a cruel carry-over from Virgil's and especially Lucan's poems—if his divine anger is the same as theirs (recall **eadem** *deum ira*)—then he is also, characteristically, determined to make it worse. Many readers of the unforgettable line at 1.3.2 (*nec enim umquam … ultionem*) have suggested that Tacitus' articulation there of divine vengeance on Rome is directly influenced by Lucan's thought at *Bellum Civile* 4.807–809.[124] Yes, but it is surely significant that Tac-

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[124] Comparing *Hist.* 1.3.2 and *BC* 4.807–809 are Courbaud (1918) 43, Paratore (1951) 354, Syme (1958) 143, Chilver (1979) 45 ("it is hard to think that T. was not conscious of Lucan IV.808 … perhaps also of VII.454"), Sage (1990) 878 n. 122 ("This is surely a reference to Lucan 4.808"), Fantham (1992) 8 n. 24 ("[Tacitus'] perception of Roman civil war as the product of divine anger echoes that of Lucan"), Hutchinson (1993) 345 n. 34, and Damon (2003) 97.

itus begins his statement with an emphatic *nec umquam*: *never before* had it been clearer that the gods opposed Rome; never before had civil war—or a work of civil war—been this calamitous, this inexplicable, this great.

"The Same Madness of Humans"

In his programmatic statement about civil war's causes, and its sameness, Tacitus adjoins to divine anger the "same madness of humans" (*eadem hominum rabies*, 2.38.2). The pointed inclusion of *hominum* in this phrase emphasizes that responsibility for Tacitus' civil wars falls as much on humans as on the gods whom he faults in the prior, parallel phrase (*eadem deum ira*). The juxtaposition of *hominum* and *rabies* also demands the reader to consider that *rabies* is not, or at least should not be, a human quality. It is a condition appropriate for beasts (*OLD* 1), and its pairing here with *hominum* has a jarring effect: subhuman, beastlike madness, Tacitus is telling us, occupies humans during civil war and drives them into *discordia*.

The madness of civil war, typically captured by the words *furor* and *rabies*, is a common theme in Latin literature.[125] But it is epic poets who elevate madness to a grand explanatory force in their narratives.[126] At *Aeneid* 1.291–296 Jupiter identifies *Furor impius* as the force that will be restrained when Rome at last puts aside her civil wars. And the civil war of Books 7–12 is sparked by the madness with which the Fury Allecto enflames the two sides (at 7.341–571); in time Aeneas himself is overtaken by it (see Books 10 and 12 *passim*, peaking at 12.946). This madness then runs rampant in Lucan's *Civil War*. Its primacy in his narrative he holds up at 1.8 (*quis furor, o ciues*? "What was this madness, citizens?"), before showing us its manifestations and consequences over the course of the poem.[127] In Tacitus' *Histories* forms of *rabies* appear four times, *furor* and *furo* eleven times. Each time these words describe the actions of his civil warriors, or the mutineers and rebels whose constant uprisings contribute to the chaotic, multi-front civil war of this work.[128] The pronounced inclusion of madness in the *Histories*, and

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[125] Jal (1963) 421–425 catalogues the appearances of *furor* and *rabies* in civil war contexts. See also Opelt (1965) 140–141 on Cicero's use of *furo* and its cognates in political polemic.

[126] Hershkowitz (1998).

[127] Studied at length by Hershkowitz (1998) 198–209. On a smaller narrative scale than that of Virgil, Lucan, or Tacitus, though with no less emotional force, Horace laments the madness of civil war at *Epod.* 7.13, *C.* 3.24.25–26, and *C.* 4.15.17–18. On the latter two, see note 132 below.

[128] *Furor* at 1.63.1, 1.81.1, 2.46.1, 3.10.4, 3.72.1, and 4.27.3. *Furo* at 1.9.1, 3.71.1, 3.83.2, 4.55.4, and 4.70.5. *Rabies* at 1.63.1, 2.38.2, 3.80.2, and 5.25.3 (tautly, of Civilis: *Civilis rabie*). The terms

the strict association of it with acts of *discordia*, certainly recalls the similar enlistment of madness by Virgil and Lucan for their civil wars.[129]

The prevalence of this force in the concluding, climactic chapters of Book 3 illustrates well how Tacitus employs it. As I discussed above, in the highly charged chapter 3.72 the historian decries the burning of the Capitol by Romans in December 69. Alongside mention of divine disapproval of Roman ways (recall *propitiis, si per mores nostros liceret, deis*), Tacitus blames the madness of the emperors (*furore principum*) for this disgraceful, unprecedented act. With the plural and thus generalized *principum*, Tacitus gets at the pervasiveness of the problem: not just an individual emperor (be it Vitellius or Vespasian), but *all* of them, or the institution of the principate as a whole, has been overtaken by the madness of civil war.[130] Just above, the Vitellian soldiers who mount the Capitol are described as similarly maddened: *furens miles*, 3.71.1. Civil warriors of every rank are being driven by madness, and all of them are complicit in the disgraces of 69.[131]

This force continues to prevail after the Capitol burns. At 3.80.2 Tacitus appears to recall and build on a specific moment of madness from Lucan's civil war. There he describes the near-murder of senatorial ambassadors by the Flavian troops lingering outside the walls of Rome:

> et ni dato a duce praesidio defensi forent, sacrum etiam in⟨ter⟩ exteras gentes legatorum ius ante ipsa patriae moenia **ciuilis rabies** usque ad exitium temerasset.
>
> And if they had not been protected by a guard provided by the general, civil madness would have desecrated—all the way to the point of murder—that sacred law of ambassadors (that is honored even in foreign lands) before the very walls of their country.

Tacitus makes *ciuilis rabies* itself the subject here; the will of the Flavian troops is subordinated to this "civil madness" or the "madness of civil war," which, without the guard present, would have murdered a group of peacemaking senators. The joining of *ciuilis* and *rabies* operates much like the juxtaposition of *hominum* and *rabies* at 2.38.2: beastlike *rabies* does not befit

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appear fewer times in the *Ann.*, and seven of the ten appearances are in his treatment of the mutinies of the Pannonian and German legions at *Ann.* 1.16–52. See Woodman (2006) 312–329 on the language of madness in these chapters.

129 Sailor (2008) 208 makes this comparison as well.

130 Sailor (2008) 209–210 reads *furor principum* as referring to the principate generally, the destroyer of the Republic, which is embodied by the Capitol. Davies (2004) 207–208 also discusses the generality of *principum* here.

131 A theme we see highlighted in 2.37–38 as well. I return to 3.71–72 in Chapter 2.

humans, and certainly not Roman citizens. The wholly "un-civic" behavior of these civil war combatants comes alive in this phrase.

Lucan is the only other author to modify *rabies* with *ciuilis*.[132] At *BC* 6.60–63, with the camps of Pompey and Caesar abutting in the territory around Dyrrachium, the poet remarks on the armies' proximity, a gauge of how imminent the decisive conflict is:

> coit area belli:
> hic alitur sanguis terras fluxurus in omnes,
> hic et Thessalicae clades Libycaeque tenentur;
> aestuat angusta **rabies ciuilis** harena.

> The field of war is contracting. Here blood destined to flow to all lands is fed. Here the disasters in Thessaly and Libya are contained; in this narrow space the civil madness simmers.

Lucan makes *rabies ciuilis* an independent agent, which for a time simmers at Dyrrachium, confined within a narrow space (*angusta … harena*—the chiasmus well demonstrates the momentary "trapping" of this animal force), but will of course burst out unchecked at Pharsalus.[133] As we have seen, Tacitus personifies and presents the activity of *ciuilis rabies* in a very similar way at *Histories* 3.80.2. And he brings out more of the tensions in the phrase by making it threaten the sacred law of ambassadors (*sacrum … ius*), and by staging the whole confrontation *ante ipsa patriae moenia*—a reminder, through the use of *patria*, that crimes driven by civil madness are intrafamilial, even patricidal in nature. Furthermore, the threat of a desecration of Rome's *moenia* may recall Lucan's suggestions of the emulative razing of Virgil's *altae moenia Romae* (*Aeneid* 1.7) in his *Bellum Civile*.[134]

Though the subhuman, desecrating ways of *ciuilis rabies* are for a time restrained by the presence of the ambassadors' guard, in the ensuing chapters (3.81–84) further attempts to thwart the Flavian soldiers' advance and to negotiate peace fail when all are struck by this madness. Accordingly, at 3.83.2 Tacitus uses *furo* to describe the fighting at Rome after the entrance of the Flavians into *ipsa patriae moenia*. *Civilis rabies* prevails.

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132 Horace writes of *rabiem ciuicam* at *C.* 3.24.26, and of *furor ciuilis* at *C.* 4.15.17–18. Valerius Maximus, discussing Catiline at *Mem.* 5.8.5, writes of the *belli ciuilis rabies*, where *ciuilis* agrees with *belli*.

133 Note e.g. the emphatic *hic furor, hic rabies, hic sunt tua crimina, Caesar* amid the battle at 7.551.

134 This is the suggestion of Henderson (1987) 144–145, with reference to *BC* 3.90 and the poem's last line, 10.546. Wellesley (1972) ad loc. calls Tacitus' phrase *ante ipsa patriae moenia* "a poetical exaggeration" and refers to *Aen.* 1.95: *Troiae sub moenibus altis*.

At *Histories* 1.63.1 we encounter another case of emulative engagement with Lucan's language of madness. There Tacitus is describing the Vitellian general Valens' march through the town of Divodurum, as he attempts to win over towns in Gaul to the Vitellian cause. Though unprovoked by the townspeople, Valens' soldiers unleash an attack on them, which Tacitus describes in a long appendage to his main clause:

> … raptis repente armis ad caedem innoxiae ciuitatis, non ob praedam aut spoliandi cupidine, sed **furore et rabie et causis incertis eoque difficilioribus remediis**, donec precibus ducis **mitigati** ab excidio ciuitatis **temperauere**; caesa tamen ad quattuor milia hominum.

> … and they suddenly snatched up arms for the slaughter of an innocent city, not for booty or out of the lust for looting, but out of a beastlike fury, and for uncertain reasons that made remedies all the more difficult—until, soothed by the entreaties of their general, they refrained from the destruction of the city. Nevertheless, some four thousand human beings were slaughtered.

The expected explanation for their plunder, the lust for booty, Tacitus explicitly rejects. Their conduct is difficult to explain rationally (*causis incertis*); the only cause he ventures to offer is that they did it out of "beastlike fury" (*furore et rabie*).

I have translated this pairing as a hendiadys, with *furor* and *rabies* working together to convey a type of compounded, redoubling "super" madness. Readers of this passage have noted that Lucan also coupled these two words.[135] He was in fact the first extant author to join *furor* and *rabies* in the description of war, and to let loose this "super" madness onto his battlefield. He introduces the pair at *BC* 4.237–245, in a simile that equates the Pompeian troops, resuming warfare after a momentary truce, with domesticated animals returning to the taste of blood. In the vehicle Lucan writes of the beasts: *si torrida paruus* | *uenit in ora cruor, redeunt rabiesque furorque* (4.239–240: "If just a little blood enters their thirsty mouths, the beastlike fury returns"). This "beastlike fury" is transferred to the soldiers, who rush back to battle at the goad of their general Petreius (4.243–245). Later in the poem Lucan uses these words in conjunction to describe the slaughter of

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[135] Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc.; Ash (1999) 180 n. 5; and Damon (2003) ad loc. note the parallel. Robbert (1917) 65–66 and Lauletta (1998) 286 discusses the possibility of a Lucanian debt. In other contexts (all in poetry), Catullus (63.4) writes of the furious madness (*furenti rabie*) of the self-castrating Attis; Lucretius (4.1117) pairs the nouns when describing the power of love; Virgil (*Aen.* 5.801–802) captures the forces of the wind and sea with this pair; Ovid (*Tr.* 2.1.149–150) and Statius (*Theb.* 7.810) use the pair similarly to describe the force of the winds.

family members at Pharsalus, the most intimate and thus the most horrific of the fighting that day: *hic furor, hic rabies, hic sunt tua crimina, Caesar* (*BC* 7.551: "Here was madness, here beastliness, here your crimes, Caesar"). Of such sights the poet refuses to write any more than these words (*BC* 7.552–554). And in the account of Caesar's tryst with Cleopatra in Book 10, a respite, says the poet, from the political and military developments at Alexandria, Lucan mentions the persistence of Caesar's sexual appetite "even in the midst of his beastlike fury" (*et in media rabie medioque furore*, 10.72). Here the collocation comes to define the entire Caesarean war effort.

Lucan's coupling of these two words—and the powerful comment on civil war that they work together to offer—was attractive to Florus, who wrote his *Epitome* in the first half of the second century, and was a frequent user of Lucanian language.[136] He juxtaposes *rabies* and *furor* three times, on one occasion when writing broadly of the lamentable Roman penchant for civil war.[137] Apart from Lucan and his *imitator* Florus, Tacitus is the only surviving author who couples the two near-synonyms in the depiction of warfare.

His adaptation of Lucan's hendiadys in *Histories* 1.63 is to great effect. When he uses the phrase *furore et rabie* to explain the Vitellian troops' slaughter, the "super" madness that Lucan depicted so vividly lives on, repeated and still causing horrors in Tacitus' civil wars. Moreover, Tacitus prolongs the medical metaphor, both in an addendum to the phrase—when he adds that remedies for this disease will be hard to find (*difficilioribus remediis*)—and later in the passage. The maddened troops are eventually soothed (*mitigati*) and calm down (*temperauere*), but the slaughter of 4,000 innocents nevertheless ensues. Townspeople in the rest of Gaul appropriately prepare for these mad men with various "means for soothing their hostile anger" (*placamenta hostilis irae*, 1.63.2).[138]

With this considerable expansion of Lucan's phrase and theme comes a greater sense of how incurable and thus prolonged this "beastlike fury" will be in the *Histories*. So, while the human madness propelling the action of

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136 So Goodyear (1982) 664 and Leigh (2007) 492.

137 *Ep.* 1.34.79: *denique in se ipse conuersus Marianis atque Sullanis, nouissime Pompei et Caesaris manibus, quasi per rabiem et furorem—nefas!—semet ipse lacerauit.* They are also paired at 1.11.21 and 1.34.53. At 2.9.16 he uses the words in proximity when writing of the civil war between Marius and Sulla.

138 See *TLL* 10.2286.25–32 and 10.2287.15–17 for *placo* used of treating diseases. And see my discussion above of the medical metaphor at 1.4.1.

Tacitus' civil wars may be the same as Lucan's madness—recall the allusive force of *eadem hominum rabies* (2.38.2)—here again is the indication that the forces driving civil war in the *Histories* have gotten more out of control, more ongoing, worse.

CHAPTER TWO

THE DEATHS OF GALBA AND THE DESECRATION OF ROME

Tacitus commits thirty-eight chapters (*Histories* 1.12–49) to the events that took place in Rome between January 1 and 15, 69, the build-up to and execution of Galba's murder. With this protracted death in the opening act he establishes the themes of desecration and deterioration that will be revisited and will escalate as the story of these civil wars unfolds. In this chapter I look closely at Galba's death-scene, and then at how Tacitus keeps that scene ever-present and repeated in his text, culminating in his description of the burning of the Capitol and the subsequent fighting at Rome (3.71–85). At the same time I address how, for the language of destruction and desecration, Tacitus turns repeatedly in Galba's death-scene and its sequels later in the *Histories* to the diction and imagery of Virgil. Adaptations, elevations, and reversals of moments from the *Aeneid* in each case complement Tacitus' presentation of the debasement of Rome—its traditions, its institutions, its physical space—in these civil wars. In the "Galban" narrative thread of the *Histories* that will be examined here, Lucan's influence is less prominent than Virgil's; though I will propose that, at the emperor's death, Tacitus inventively weaves in complementary allusions to Lucan's Pompey, and to moments from Sallust's and Livy's histories.

Galba and Priam

As we shall see over the next two chapters, Tacitus leads his reader to the Troy of *Aeneid* 2 again and again in the *Histories*. An important figure for him in the narrative of Galba's death is Virgil's Priam. In the death-scene itself (1.35–41) Tacitus casts the dying emperor as another Priam,[1] his death a recurrence of that seminal Roman death. Before considering in full the value of this intertext to the narrative of the *Histories*, let us examine precisely how Tacitus introduces Priam into his text.

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[1] Several readers of *Hist.* 1 have noted the parallels. See esp. Benario (1972) and Ash (1999) 79–83, as well as the observations by Miller (1987) 99–100, Foucher (2000) 302, Pagán (2006) 208–209, Keitel (2010) 346–350, and Damon (2010b) 382–383.

We begin in 1.35, where Galba's death march gets underway. Otho's revolt has been known to him since 1.32, but now a false report of the usurper's death circulates, with the result that a celebratory crowd rushes upon the palace. Of the emperor's next move Tacitus writes, at 1.35.1:

> nemo scire et omnes adfirmare, donec inopia ueri et consensu errantium uictus sumpto thorace Galba inruenti turbae neque aetate neque corpore sistens sella leuaretur.
>
> No one knew anything, but all were asserting things, until Galba, overcome by a shortage of the truth and by the consensus of the deluded, put on his breastplate and, since his age and frailty prevented him from resisting the crowd that was rushing upon him, was elevated in a sedan chair.

Tacitus' details in this scene are peculiar—and peculiarly Priam-like. In Suetonius (*Galba* 19.1), the only other source to mention Galba's arming, the emperor puts on, quite different from a breastplate, a cloth corselet: *loricam … induit linteam quanquam haud dissimulans parum aduersus tot mucrones profuturam* ("He puts on a cloth corselet, but does not pretend that it will be any help against so many swords"). And Suetonius, we see, has Galba pointedly anticipate the *futility* of his defense, whereas Tacitus' Galba equips himself in earnest. Later in this chapter he writes correspondingly of how the emperor was undaunted by the seditious soldiers now threatening him (*minantibus intrepidus*, 1.35.2).[2] This "last stand" by a weak old ruler that we find uniquely in Tacitus' version recalls Virgil's famous portrait of Priam pitifully arming himself, at *Aeneid* 2.509–511:

> arma diu senior desueta trementibus aeuo
> circumdat nequiquam umeris et inutile ferrum
> cingitur, ac densos fertur moriturus in hostis.
>
> In vain the old man throws his armor—which has been out of use for a long time—around shoulders that tremble with age, and he arms himself with his futile sword, and, about to die, advances towards the packed enemy.

The combination of determination (*densos fertur … in hostis*) and inevitable futility (*nequiquam*, *inutile ferrum*, *moriturus*) is Virgil's focus here.[3] It is

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[2] And in this respect Galba can be contrasted with so many of those around him on that day. See e.g. 1.41.2, of the litter-bearers at the moment of his fall (**trepidatione** *ferentium Galba proiectus e sella ac prouolutus est*); and 1.50.1, of the city itself after the murder (**trepidam** *urbem* …), with my discussion in Chapter 1.

[3] As Benario (1972) 146 notes, pointing also to Priam's futile toss at 2.544: *telum imbelle sine ictu*. Of Priam here Austin (1964) 199 writes: "The pitiful details are piled up to show the hopelessness of Priam's bravery in his helpless age."

precisely this pathetic yet noble effort that Tacitus has Galba undertake, so unlike the resigned Galba of Suetonius' account.[4]

Details of setting also link the final moments of the two old rulers. The shattering of the doors of Priam's palace—the trampling of the *limen* into the very seat of power—is a particular point of focus in *Aeneid* 2.[5] And Tacitus (unlike Suetonius, Plutarch, and Dio) likewise zooms in on the breaking of the palace doors when the mob rushes in towards Galba (*refractis Palatii foribus*, 1.35.1)[6]—an invasion that leads the emperor to head out, doomed, into the Forum. Both authors also underline the sacredness of the murder sites, and thus the sacrilegious nature of the murders. Priam is a suppliant at the altar of the Penates (*Aeneid* 2.512–514, 550) when Pyrrhus slays him. Tacitus similarly focuses on the profanity of Galba's murder, in light of the surroundings, at 1.40.2:

> nec illos Capitolii aspectus et imminentium templorum religio et priores et futuri principes terruere quo minus facerent scelus cuius ultor est quisquis successit.
>
> Neither the sight of the Capitol nor the sanctity of the overhanging temples, nor the once and future *principes* frightened [Galba's attackers] from committing a crime whose avenger is whoever takes the office next.

Tacitus' emphasis on the *religio* at the murder scene is absent from the other accounts of Galba's murder.[7]

The two authors also conclude the death-scenes of their monarchs in a similar way, with a close-up of their headless bodies, abused and abandoned. Virgil chillingly ends his treatment of Priam's death with the king's mutilated corpse left alone on the shore (*iacet ingens litore truncus, | auulsumque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus*, "His huge trunk lies on the shore, his head ripped from its shoulders, a body without a name," *Aeneid* 2.557–558). Tacitus, just before moving on to the murders of Vinius (1.42) and Piso (1.43), leaves Galba similarly disgraced, at 1.41.3: *pleraque uulnera feritate et*

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[4] Ash (1999) 80. Keitel (2010) 346 also notes Galba's supporters' reference to them being under siege (*obsidionem*, 1.33.1), and "thus Galba, Priam-like, is besieged in his own palace."

[5] See *Aen.* 2.491–495 and 503–508, with the discussion of Kenney (1979), esp. 117–118.

[6] Ash (1999) 79. Miller (1987) 94–95 compares Vinius' instruction at 1.32.2 to fortify the doors (*firmandos aditus*) to similar orders from Turnus at *Aen.* 11.466 (*pars aditus urbis firment*), the only instances of this collocation in either author.

[7] Keitel (2006) 235 notes this distinction from Plutarch's account. Tacitus (1.41.2), Plutarch (*Galba* 27.1), and Suetonius (*Galba* 20.2) all mention that the murder took place beside the Lacus Curtius, the site of Marcus Curtius' *deuotio* of himself in order to repair Rome's relationship with the gods; but only Tacitus develops this theme, to which I return below.

saeuitia trunco iam corpori adiecta (“and many wounds were inflicted, out of beastliness and savageness, on his already mutilated body”). Virgil’s final definition of Priam’s body as just a *truncus* and, again at line-end, a nameless *corpus* may be imitated by Tacitus in his concluding description of Galba in this chapter: *trunco iam corpori.*

Such, then, are the chief correspondences with Virgil’s Priam in Galba’s death-scene: the futile yet earnest arming by an old monarch, the defilement of a sacred site, and the abandonment of a headless body. Perhaps the closest verbal correspondence occurs at 1.26.1, during the narrative build-up to the murder. There Tacitus describes the hesitation of the rebelling praetorians, who on January 14 postpone the selection of Otho and murder of Galba. They do this, Tacitus tells us, for fear of logistical confusion, and “not out of care for the republic, which they were deliberately preparing to defile with the blood of their own *princeps*” (*non rei publicae cura, quam* **foedare** *principis sui* **sanguine** *sobrii parabant*). The expression *foedare sanguine* appears to be drawn from *Aeneid* 2.501–502, during Aeneas’ preview (2.499–505) of the horrors that he saw in Priam’s palace:

> uidi Hecubam centumque nurus Priamumque per aras
> **sanguine foedantem** quos ipse sacrauerat ignis.
>
> I saw Hecuba, and her hundred daughters-in-law, and Priam at the altars, defiling with blood the fires that he himself had consecrated.

This description summarizes the murder of Priam and desecration of the altars that are recounted in detail at 2.506–558. For Virgil it is the perversion of sacrificial practice, the bloodying of a sacred place—with the blood of the ruler himself—that conveys best the horror of Priam’s, and Troy’s, death. Tacitus, we see, takes Virgil’s image and runs with it. He brings in the poet’s language of gory sacrilege (*foedare … sanguine*),[8] indicating that the blood of a monarch will again be spilt in an act of desecration. And he makes the object of defilement something just as sacred as the Trojan hearth, but even grander, even more “untouchable”: the republic itself. And so with the wording at 1.26.1 Tacitus prepares the reader for Galba’s Priam-like death, while at the same time holding up the pivotal place of this event

[8] The pairing of *foedo* and *sanguis* is not itself unique (see e.g. Ovid, *Met.* 3.522, 7.845, and 13.563), but the contexts in our two passages are very close, a fact overlooked by the skeptical Foucher (2000) 310 and Miller (1987) 91, who maintains that such an argument cannot be made “unless the Tacitean context is very Virgilian, and in other ways connected with the appropriate Virgilian passage”; at 100 she appears more open to the possibility of an allusion here.

in his narrative of the year that was almost the republic's last (*annum … rei publicae prope supremum*, 1.11.3).

Tacitus' evocation of the Priam of *Aeneid* 2 brings with it many meaningful associations. In the narrative of *Aeneid* 2 Priam's death marks the formal end of Troy. It is "an end-point and, more specifically, … an emblem of the end of the city."[9] This is certainly how Aeneas, the narrator of Book 2, sees it. After describing Neoptolemus' murder of Priam, Aeneas proclaims to his Carthaginian audience, at *Aeneid* 2.554–558:

> haec finis Priami fatorum, hic exitus illum
> sorte tulit Troiam incensam et prolapsa uidentem
> Pergama, tot quondam populis terrisque superbum
> regnatorem Asiae. iacet ingens litore truncus,
> auulsumque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus.

> This was the end of the fates of Priam. This death by chance brought him down, while he watched Troy burning and Pergamum collapsing—once the ruler of Asia, the proud lord of so many peoples and lands. His huge trunk lies on the shore, his head ripped from its shoulders, a body without a name.

Aeneas equates the *fata Priami* with the *fata Troiae*, an equation that Virgil emphasizes throughout the *Aeneid*.[10] With Troy's destruction now formalized by the death of Priam, Aeneas is free to move on. And, though he will require further goading from the ghost of Creusa (*Aeneid* 2.776–789), Aeneas does now follow his new, Roman course, and his story begins anew. In this sense, Priam's death is productive for Aeneas, and generative for the Roman race.

However, Priam's death is a stubborn one, seemingly doomed for frustrating repetition. The Latin War in *Aeneid* 7–12 plays out like a repetition of the Trojan War, the destruction of Latinus' city mirroring the destruction of Troy.[11] And Latinus himself emerges as a second Priam. At *Aeneid* 7.243–248 the Trojan ambassador Ilioneus presents the Latin king with an assortment of gifts, chief among them the *Priami gestamen*. Latinus assumes

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[9] Bowie (1990) 470. Heinze (1993) 23–24 surveys the other accounts of Priam's death and concludes that, unlike for other sources such as Tryphiodorus and Apollodorus, for Virgil, "a poet arranging his material from an artistic viewpoint, it was impossible that Priam should be killed 'in passing.'" We can see the impact of Virgil's emphasis on Priam's death in John Denham's "The Destruction of Troy" (1656), a translation of *Aen.* 2 up to, and concluding with, "a headless Carkass, and a nameless Thing."

[10] Virgil uses Priam as a veritable metonym for Troy in Book 2 at lines 22, 56, 191, 291, 344, 581, 760, as well as at e.g. 3.1, 4.343–344, 8.398–399, and 12.545. Ovid continues this practice at *Met.* 13.404 (*Troia simul Priamusque cadunt*).

[11] As I discuss in the Introduction.

Priam's regalia: he will play the part of the helpless, pitiful Priam in this first "reliving" of the fall of Troy.[12] Moreover, the further repetition of Priam's emblematic death in later, real Roman history is already implicated in the passage from *Aeneid* 2 printed above. As readers of the poem since Servius have noted, at *Aeneid* 2.556–558 Virgil casts the dead Priam to look like the beheaded Pompey, another *superbus regnator Asiae*, on the Egyptian shore.[13] Thus Virgil makes the seminal Roman death—that of Priam and Troy—live on in another way, as the scene of the Trojan king's death echoes and at the same time foreshadows the death of Pompey, murdered amid his civil war with Caesar.

The impression that Virgil's poem gives, then, is that Priam's death, while essential and productive for Aeneas and Rome, means something quite different, and worse, *when it is repeated*. Put another way, in the *Aeneid* Priam's death comes to represent both rise and fall, and in fact the cycle of rise and fall.[14] And herein lies a significant difference between the deaths of Virgil's Priam and Tacitus' Priam-like Galba in the *Histories*. Each death is epochal, marking the beginning of a story, that of Aeneas and the founding of Rome, and that of Rome in the years 69 to 96 CE. But Tacitus departs from Virgil in that Galba's death is *only* a fall. Nothing productive, no escape, no foundation, no rise is to come out of it. As the subsequent narrative of the extant *Histories* demonstrates (and as I shall argue over the remainder of this study), what follows from Tacitus' opening death is only more death and desecration, heightened chaos, and the intensifying civil war of the ensuing narrative.[15] Virgil, as we have seen, implies the ongoing repetition of Priam's

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[12] On the idea that "history is repeating itself" when Latinus assumes Priam's garb, see Reckford (1961) 265 and Quint (1993) 65. And see Horsfall (2000) 187 for a full bibliography on the passage, as well as Horsfall (1981) 147–148 on Virgil's departure from the tradition in depicting Latinus as too old to fight (and, in that sense, Priam-like).

[13] Servius ad *Aen.* 2.557: *Pompei tangit historiam, cum "ingens" dicit, non "magnus."* On Priam as Pompey here, see most recently Moles (1982–1983), Bowie (1990), Morgan (2000), and Rossi (2004) 30–40, who concludes: "By conflating the death of Priam with that of Pompey, the narrator Virgil, who for a brief time seems to usurp the role of the narrator Aeneas, may be implicitly suggesting that Rome, too, has already completed an important cycle of rise and fall. Now a new cycle awaits Rome, one that carries with it all the uncertainties of new beginnings" (40).

[14] So Rossi (2004) 30–40 (see the quotation in the previous note).

[15] Ash (1999) 83: "For Tacitus, Galba's death was more important than his life, as the starting-point of the *Histories* suggests … The brutal killing of this elderly emperor will pave the way for worse atrocities and set a terrifying precedent." In her discussion of Tacitus' use of the *urbs capta* motif, Keitel (2010) 349–350 also refers to his employment of the "portable, endlessly repeatable last night of Troy" (349) in the *Hist.* But she, like Foucher (2000) 420–421, sees a positive distinction for Rome (350: "She is not Troy, in the sense of being totally

death into contemporary Roman history, through the powerful evocation of Pompey. On this feature of Priam's death, and this feature alone, Tacitus seizes. The Trojan king's foundational death is repeated in Galba's, which, as we shall see, Tacitus' characters revisit, reenact, and thus escalate over the remainder of *Histories* 1–3.

Additional Galban Intertexts (*by Way of Priam?*)

Priam's "ur-death" in *Aeneid* 2 may be the most developed and most evocative intertext in Galba's death-scene, but the Trojan king is not the only figure intertextually recalled in this rich passage. Damon has recently observed how the emperor's impudence in the face of ill-boding omens (see 1.18.1, 1.27.1, 1.29.1, and 1.38.1) recalls the attitude of the historical Julius Caesar on the Ides of March.[16] And there are several echoes in 1.41–49 of the death of Pompey, in particular Lucan's Pompey. Ash has discussed the details in Galba's death-scene that are familiar from the account of Pompey's death and burial in *Bellum Civile* 8, notably that both rulers suffer from a collective attack (1.41.3 and *BC* 8.612–613), at the hands of their own soldiers (1.41 and 8.596), and are buried by assistants (1.49.1 and 8.786–792).[17]

What strikes me is how Tacitus shares with Lucan the manner of narratively stretching out the "afterlife" of his dead ruler's remains—and so compelling the reader to reflect longer upon the murder and its significance. And each author's prolonged consideration of the separated head and corpse can be read as a meaningful expansion of Virgil's famous image of Priam's remains. As we saw above, at *Aeneid* 2.557–558 Virgil captures in one and a half taut lines the brutal separation of Priam's / Pompey's head from its corpse: *iacet ingens litore truncus,* | *auulsumque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus*. Lucan seizes on and perpetuates the image, turning Virgil's Pompeian Priam into his Priam-like Pompey. He alludes to *Aeneid* 2.557–558 directly when describing Pompey's remains at 1.685–686 and 8.710–711,[18]

destroyed; she survives")—a distinction that I think is rejected in the *Hist.* by the constant repetition of Virgil's Troy and of the work's own disasters.

16 Damon (2010) 381–382, who draws parallels from the narrative of the Ides of March in Suetonius' *Divus Iulius*, but suggests that "the 'intertext' in our passage is an event, not a text."

17 Ash (1999) 80–81, who adds that Galba's eventual burial in his private gardens (1.49.1) is also found in Plutarch's *Pompey* (8.10). She proposes that Asinius Pollio's lost *Histories* is the ultimate source for the details about Pompey's death, and that Tacitus may be alluding to the Pollian account in Galba's death-scene.

18 1.685–686: *hunc ego, fluminea deformis* **truncus** *harena* | *qui* **iacet**, *agnosco*; and 8.710–711: *nullaque manente figura* | *una nota est Magno* **capitis** *iactura* **reuulsi**. The connections

but also stretches Virgil's "snapshot" out over some two hundred ten lines (8.663–872), with grisly details about the severing, draining, and impaling of the head (8.663–692), the drifting of the trunk along the shore (8.693–711), and then at last the trunk's burial in a shallow grave by the soldier Cordus (8.712–872). In a similar manner Tacitus describes the slaying and decapitation of his Priam-like Galba—recall the possible Virgilian echo in the weighted *trunco iam corpori* (1.41.3)—in 1.41, but leaves the emperor's remains separated, unburied, and abused for some eight chapters, until 1.49.1. The historian's method of postponing Galba's burial for as long as possible in his narrative may be seen in particular in his placement of three chapters (1.45–47) on Otho's, the senate's, and the city troops' first actions under the new administration *between* his accounts of the murders and the burials. While the basic progression here may go back to a common source, such a lengthy drawing out of the "afterlife," and thus the debasement, of Galba's remains is not to be found in the accounts of Suetonius, Plutarch, and Dio.[19] And when Tacitus does at last get to the inhumation in 1.49.1, there is one final type of postponement. He places a long series of descriptors and details between Galba's head and the body to which it is at last added, so keeping the body parts separated until the very last moment:

> **caput** per lixas calonesque suffixum laceratumque ante Patrobii tumulum (libertus is Neronis punitus a Galba fuerat) postera demum die repertum et cremato iam **corpori admixtum est.**
>
> His head, which the sutlers and camp-follwers had fixed to a pole and mutilated, and which had at last been found on the following day in front of the tomb of Patrobius, a freedman of Nero's who had been executed by Galba, to its already cremated body was added.[20]

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between Virgil's Priam and Lucan's Pompey (noted by Austin (1964) 214) are discussed by Hinds (1998) 9–10 and Narducci (1979) 43–48, who at 47–48 looks at falling Troy as a figure for self-destructive Rome. At 44–46, with n. 23, he explores the history of the Pompey-Priam parallel, perhaps first made by Cicero at *Tusc.* 1.85–86. The parallel is taken up by Manilius at *Astr.* 4.50–65, which Narducci (47) sees as another possible model for Lucan. Hardie (1993a) 30 suggests that the death of old Scaevola before the altar of Vesta at *BC* 2.126–129 operates as another Lucanian replay of Priam's death.

19 Plutarch in *Galba* 26–29 follows roughly the same progression as Tacitus in 1.41–49, with many of the same details, but allows much less narrative space to pass between Galba's murder (27.2–3) and burial (28.3). There is also a comparable progression in Dio (64.6.2–7.1), though no mention of the burial. The account by Suetonius (limited to *Galba* 20) is significantly more succinct. See further Miller (1978) 20–21 on the differences among the accounts.

20 Contrast Suetonius, *Galba* 20.2: *sero tandem dispensator Argiuus* **et hoc** [the head] **et ceterum truncum** *in priuatis eius hortis Aurelia uia sepulturae dedit*. Plutarch (*Galba* 28.3) writes that the head and body were disposed of separately.

During this narrative prolongment of the "afterlife" of Galba's remains, Tacitus, unlike our other sources, also crafts characters who reflect on the magnitude and memorability of the event. A "recollection of the greatness in Galba" (*recordatio maiestatis in Galba*, 1.44.1) strikes Otho after the murder; and the legionaries who parade Galba's and Piso's heads around the standards of Legio I Adiutrix (1.44.2) boast about the crime "as though it were a beautiful and memorable deed" (*ut pulchrum et memorabile facinus*, 1.44.2). These characters' meditations on the memorability of Galba's murder trigger similar reactions from the reader. And so the emperor's "greatness" and death stay fresh and at the front of the reader's mind even while Tacitus diligently puts off his burial.

Whether or not Tacitus' manner of drawing out Galba's debasement is meant to recall Lucan's extended treatment of Pompey's remains in *Bellum Civile* 8,[21] the two authors appear to use this technique for the same purpose: so that their rulers' deaths immediately take on an abiding and meaningful "afterlife." And here we may also witness the authors' comparable ways of building upon Virgil, in their similarly bold expansions upon the picture of Priam at *Aeneid* 2.557–558. Furthermore, if Tacitus in 1.41–49 is indeed recalling Pompey's seemingly unending end in *BC* 8, then he may do so to underscore just how ominous a beginning to the *Histories* Galba's end marks. Lucan gives Pompey's end the weight and almost comical prolongment that he does because for him this death represents the beginning of something big: the rule of Caesar and the Caesars, of Caesarism.[22] In the *Histories* Galba's end is similarly momentous and world-changing, ushering in a year and a narrative of consequent and escalating horrors. And the reach and consequence of this death are surely affirmed if we view it as a replay of not just Priam's foundational end, but also the nearly interminable—and also epochal—end of Lucan's Pompey.

Another scene from the Republican civil wars that may accompany and complement Tacitus' evocation of Priam's death is from the horrors of the 80s BCE, as told by Sallust. Above in this chapter I discussed how the description of the praetorians' plans to kill Galba at 1.26.1 (*non rei publicae cura, quam* **foedare** *principis sui* **sanguine** *sobrii parabant*) builds upon Virgil's language for the murder of Priam at *Aeneid* 2.501–502 (*uidi ... Priamumque per aras* | **sanguine foedantem** *quos ipse* **sacrauerat** *ignis*). In his commentary on *Aeneid* 2.502 Servius quotes, for comparison, the wording of Sallust

21 Might the remembrance of Galba's greatness (*maiestas*) at 1.44.1 also trigger thoughts of Pompeius Magnus?

22 On this aspect of Lucan's poem, see my discussion in the Introduction.

in *Histories* 1: *cum* **arae** *et alia diis* **sacrata** *supplicum* **sanguine foedarentur** ("when the altars and other things sacred to the gods were being defiled by the blood of suppliants"). Editors of the *Histories* have placed this fragment into the account of Sulla's proscriptions,[23] or into the period of Cinna's and Marius' rule.[24] If we consider the very close parallels in diction, image, and context, might Virgil be adapting this scene from Sallust? Are we to see in Virgil's fall of Troy yet another reflection / anticipation of events in Roman civil war history, to go with the appearance of the beheaded Pompey at *Aeneid* 2.556–558?[25] In this reading, the murder of Priam at the altars operates as a paradigm for the mass murders of suppliants at the altars during the civil strife of the 80s BCE, be it during Sulla's ascendancy or Marius' and Cinna's. And, to bring us back to Galba, when Tacitus uses *foedare sanguine* at 1.26.1 to describe the murder of the emperor, he may be directing us back to *both* of these texts, thus plotting the sacrileges of Sallust's wars as an additional, compounding iteration in the series that began with the "ur-death" of Priam and that is now ominously continuing here at the outset of the *Histories*.

The Scene of the Crime

Later in this chapter I will discuss how Tacitus builds upon more moments from Virgil's Fall of Troy, and upon his own Fall of Galba, for the telling of the Fall of Rome in *Histories* 3. For now I would like to dwell a little longer on January 15, at the scene of Galba's murder. Two as yet undiscussed Virgilian allusions in *Histories* 1.40 contribute further to the sense of sacrilege and the upheaval of tradition on that day.

The first of these is at 1.40.2, where Tacitus focuses on the unsettling fact that Roman soldiers were advancing to kill not a Parthian king, but their own emperor:

> igitur milites Romani, quasi Vologaesum aut Pacorum auito Arsacidarum solio depulsuri ac non imperatorem suum inermem et senem trucidare pergerent, disiecta plebe, **proculcato senatu**, truces armis, rapidi equis forum inrumpunt.

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23 Maurenbrecher (1893) 18–19 (fr. 1.47) and McGushin (1992) 106–107.

24 Kritz (1853) 25.

25 The reflection of Rome's destruction of her sister city Alba Longa (an early, foundational act of civil war) may also be seen in *Aen.* 2. See Servius' suggestive note ad *Aen.* 2.486, with the discussions by Bowie (1990) 472 and Rossi (2004) 42–44. On Virgil's engagement with Sallust, see Syme (1964) 286 and Ash (2002) 256–267.

> Therefore Roman soldiers—as if they were going to remove Vologaesus or Pacorus from the ancestral throne of the Arsacidae, and were not advancing to slaughter their own unarmed and elderly emperor—scatter the mob, trample the senate, and, savagely armed and quick on their horses, burst into the Forum.

The inclusion of the descriptor *Romani* for these soldiers serves to capture the disgrace of their internecine act, the "total perversion of Roman values inherent in their conduct,"[26] as do the details about the quick and blatant disregard for the senate and people (*disiecta plebe*, *proculcato senatu*). With these parallel, rapid-fire phrases, both the stature of and the distinctions between the SPQR are dashed.[27] Strengthening this troubling picture is Tacitus' use of the verb *proculco*, which he employs just one other time, at *Histories* 3.81.1, of the Flavian soldiers' similar plans to violently push aside the senatorial legate Musonius Rufus. While *proculco* is a verb that appears in much post-Augustan prose, Damon's reference here to its use at *Aeneid* 12.532–534 may be profitable.[28] The situation described in Virgil's passage is quite similar. Aeneas has just flung the Rutulian Murranus from his chariot, and the man is trampled by his own horses:

> hunc lora et iuga subter
> prouoluere rotae, crebro super ungula pulsu
> incita **nec domini memorum proculcat** equorum.

> The wheels roll him forward beneath the reins and the yoke, and above him the quick hooves of his horses—forgetting their master—trample him with many a beat.

The striking detail here is that the trampling horses "forget their master" (*nec domini memorum*). This is a master whose lineage Virgil spent nearly two lines building up, at 12.529–530: *atauos et auorum antiqua sonantem* | *nomina per regesque actum genus omne Latinos* ("[Murranus], sounding off about his ancestors and the old names of his grandfathers, and how his whole race was descended from Latin kings"). In a flash, all of Murranus' noble pedigree and his status as the horses' master are forgotten, and trampled.

Like Murranus' horses, the horsemen at *Histories* 1.40.2 disregard the senate, its history, and its erstwhile authority when they trample it: *proculcato senatu*. Tacitus' use of the formal collective *senatus*, along with the succinct,

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26 Morgan (1994a) 242. See similarly Borgo (1977) 130.
27 As Sailor (2008) 197 discusses.
28 Damon (2003) ad loc.

brisk manner in which that body is so easily trampled, already conveys the invaders' disgrace of the senate. And if Tacitus is indeed directing the reader to this startling and contextually comparable use of *proculco* in *Aeneid* 12, then there are also several signs of escalation: the act is sped up in Tacitus' swift, two-word ablative absolute; the trampling of one master is made the trampling of many; and the forgetful heedlessness of horses becomes the knowing, *purposeful* irreverence of Roman soldiers.

In my discussion above of the Priam-like manner of Galba's death, I addressed Tacitus' focus on the sacredness of the emperor's murder-site in the Forum, a sacredness brazenly disregarded by his killers. This focus on Rome's scenery is typical of the historian's practice in the *Histories*. As Catharine Edwards has noted, in the *Annals* there is relatively little reference to the material city, whereas in the *Histories* "repeated mention of the city's buildings serves as a reminder that this text is concerned with civil wars, some of whose battles are fought in the very streets of the empire's capital."[29] Indeed, in his narrative of January 15, Tacitus is sure to note that the consul Vinius is killed "in front of the temple of the deified Caesar" (*ante aedem diui Iulii*, 1.42), "a reminder that killing the ruler in the heart of the city is an old Roman tradition."[30] And Piso is slaughtered in the entrance to the temple of Vesta (*in foribus templi*, 1.43.2); for a while he had remained safe there, though "hidden not because of the *religio* and rituals of the place, but only through its secrecy" (*abditus non religione nec caerimoniis, sed latebra*, 1.43.2).

The setting of the scene of Galba's murder, on which Tacitus concentrates like no other source in the parallel tradition,[31] merits further attention from us. I print again the sentence at 1.40.2 that follows immediately after the horsemen's invasion of the forum:

> nec illos Capitolii aspectus et imminentium templorum religio et priores et futuri principes terruere quo minus facerent scelus cuius ultor est quisquis successit.

Here the historian goes so far as to give the monuments of the forum their own role in the events of January 15, as they try, but fail, to deter Galba's

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[29] Edwards (1996) 75. See also Ash (2007b) on Tacitus' use of the monuments of the city in *Hist.* 3.67.2–86, much of which I treat later in this chapter.

[30] Edwards (1996) 77. No other author mentions this detail.

[31] Dio (64.6.3) writes only that Galba was met "in the middle of the Roman forum"; and Suetonius (20.2) only that he was killed *ad lacum Curti*. On Plutarch's description of the setting, see note 38 below.

murderers from going through with the deed.[32] The potency of Tacitus' appeal to the sacred surroundings of Galba's murder is heightened by two pointed allusions in this chapter, to a moment in Livy's history of Rome, and to the proto-Rome of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Let us first consider the Livian allusion, before moving on to the complementary activation of Virgil.

R.T. Scott has argued that Tacitus presents Galba's murder beside the Lacus Curtius (*iuxta Curtii lacum*, 1.41.2) as an inversion of the *deuotio* of Marcus Curtius at that very spot. According to Roman legend, the young soldier Curtius, in order to expiate a portentous opening in the earth and thus repair Rome's relationship with the gods, offered himself up as an embodiment of Rome's greatest strength, its *uirtus*. He submerged himself in the opening, which then closed up.[33] Scott observes that Galba, in one of the reports of his last words that Tacitus provides, also views his death as an act of self-sacrifice for the state (1.41.2: *agerent ac ferirent, si ita ⟨e⟩ re publica uideretur*, "Go ahead and deliver the blow, if this seems best for the republic"). Scott thus connects the two deaths, and concludes: "The self-immolation of Curtius closed the chasm that threatened the destruction of Rome, but the murder of Galba can only symbolise its reopening, pinpointing as it does the beginning of a year of Roman self-destruction."[34]

I think that Tacitus does indeed aim to recall the death of Marcus Curtius, and, as we shall see, the historian returns to the Lacus Curtius, with all its associations, at several points in the subsequent narrative. It also appears that in 1.40–41 the historian is alluding to a specific account of Curtius' *deuotio*, that of Livy at 7.6.1–6.[35] More precisely, the setting of the

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32 On 1.40.2 Rouveret (1991) 3071 writes: "Tacite indique que les édifices du forum, véritables symbols de l'*urbs* et de son empire, auraient dû jouer leur rôle de *monumentum*, avertir le soldat romain de ne pas violer l'espace civil." See Pomeroy (2006) 186–191 for a discussion of the Roman populace's role as a detached spectator to this and subsequent scenes in the *Hist.*

33 Curtius' act is one of three explanations given for the lake's name. See Varro, *DLL* 5.148–150, and notes 34 and 36 below.

34 Scott (1968) 58, *pace* Sage (1990) 944 n. 464. Rouveret (1991) 3071 and Poulle (1998) suggest that Tacitus is also recalling one of the other possible sources for the lake's name, Mettius Curtius, the Sabine hero who leapt into the lake during Rome's war with the Sabines (Varro, *DLL* 5.149 and Livy, 1.12.9–10 and 1.13.5), the "guerre archétype de toutes les guerres civiles ultérieures" (Poulle (1998) 315). Edwards (2012) 243–248 also discusses the significance of the depiction of Galba's death as a *devotio*.

35 Scott (1968) does not link Tacitus' narrative specifically with Livy, 7.6.1–6. Damon (2003) ad loc. notes in brief the contrast between the two passages. Ash (2007b) 227–229 also discusses many of the points of contact and contrast in the two passages, along with 3.71.1, which I treat below in this chapter.

deuotio in Livy is recalled by Tacitus. The moment of self-sacrifice in Livy's telling is at 7.6.4:

> et silentio facto templa deorum immortalium, quae foro imminent, Capitoliumque intuentem et manus nunc in caelum, nunc in patentes terrae hiatus ad deos manes porrigentem, se deuouisse.
>
> And, when silence was made, as [Curtius] looked up at the temples of the immortal gods, which hang over the forum, and at the Capitol, and as he extended his hands now to the sky, now to the gaping chasm in the earth and the gods below, he sacrificed himself.

Several of the details that appear here are not found in the other accounts of Curtius' *deuotio*: the silence that precedes the act is unique to Livy, as is the dramatic inclusion of the forum's overhanging buildings and the Capitol, at which the reverent Curtius gazes.[36] These exact details of setting appear in *Histories* 1.40, and uniquely there among the accounts of Galba's death. Like Livy, but with more elaboration, Tacitus describes the silence in the moments before Galba's death, at 1.40.1: *non tumultus, non quies, quale magni metus et magnae irae silentium est* ("There was not commotion, nor calm; it was like the silence of great fear and of great anger").[37] And, as we saw above, Tacitus drapes the forum—that is, the scene of the crime—with overhanging temples (*imminentium templorum*, 1.40.2), just as Livy does.[38] In fact, Livy and Tacitus are the only two authors to characterize

[36] At D.H. *RA* 14.11.1–5 there is mention of prayer to the gods (at 4), but no mention of the forum's buildings. Varro, *DLL* 5.148 merely has Curtius turn away from the Temple of Concord (*a Concordia uersum*). [Plut] *Par. Min.* 306e–307a and Dio, fr. 7.30.1–2 (= Zonaras 7.25) have none of these details. See Oakley (1997–2005) on 7.6.1 on these and other reports of Curtius' *deuotio*.

[37] Borgo (1977) makes the intriguing suggestion that the content and structure of this sentence are based on Lucan, *BC* 1.258–261, a description of the silence of the people of Arminium as Caesar marches through their town: *uox nulla dolori* | *credita; sed quantum, uolucres cum bruma coercet,* | *rura silent, mediusque tacet sine murmure pontus,* | *tanta quies*. Though the two pictures do not seem extraordinarily similar to me, both Lucan's and Tacitus' silences precede dramatic openings to their wars (Caesar's crossing of the Rubicon, Galba's murder); and if Tacitus is alluding to *BC* 1.258–261, it is surely an emulative gesture, with the detail *non quies* indicating that the *silentium* in the Forum on January 15 is more fraught and ominous than the *quies* described by Lucan. Morgan (1994a) 239 n. 18 acknowledges this possibility, while discussing Xenophon, *Ages*. 2.12 as the closer parallel (238–239, with further bibliography). See too Livy's wording at 1.29.2. *Hist*. 1.40.1 is different from—and bolder than—each of these in that Tacitus contrasts one type of quiet and another. This contrast is removed if *quale ... est* is made to stand in apposition to *quies*, as Husband (1915) reads it.

[38] Plutarch (*Galba* 26.4) may be working from the same source material as Tacitus when he writes of the "porticoes and elevated parts of the forum" (τὰς στοὰς καὶ τὰ μετέωρα τῆς

the appearance of a temple with the word *immineo*; and each does so just one other time.[39] Both authors (again, uniquely in both traditions) also specifically mention the Capitol's presence. By taking these identical points of detail from Livy's scene, Tacitus creates the same setting for Galba's death as was there for Curtius'.

But what differentiates the two passages, and the two deaths, is of course the impact of this setting. Whereas Livy has Marcus Curtius look to (*intuentem*) the temples and the Capitol in a gesture of piety before his act of sacrifice, the sight (*aspectus*) of the Capitol and the *religio* of the temples have no effect at all on Galba's murderers. These very different responses to the sacred sights of the Roman Forum reflect well the contrast between Curtius, who kills himself for the sake of Rome's stability, and the Roman soldiers, who brazenly kill their own emperor, and thus accelerate Rome's year of instability and civil war.

Complementing the allusion to Livy is a Virgilian one. Let us consider the wording in 1.40.2 one last time:

> nec illos **Capitolii** aspectus et imminentium templorum **religio** et priores et futuri principes **terruere** quo minus facerent scelus cuius ultor est quisquis successit.

The implication that the sight of the Capitol and the *religio* of the surrounding temples should have frightened the killers brings to mind the passage in *Aeneid* 8 where Virgil observes the frightening power of *religio* in that very spot in the heart of the city. This is at 8.347–350, as Evander is guiding Aeneas through Pallanteum, the future sight of Rome:

> hinc ad Tarpeiam sedem et **Capitolia** ducit
> aurea nunc, olim siluestribus horrida dumis.
> iam tum **religio** pauidos **terrebat** agrestis
> dira loci, iam tum siluam saxumque tremebant.

> From here [Evander] leads him to the Tarpeian seat, and to the Capitol, golden now, but then rough with woodland bushes. Already then the dreadful sense of awe of the place terrified the fearful farmers; already then they trembled at the forest and the rock.

ἀγορᾶς). But he mentions these as spots from which the crowd could get a good view of Galba's murder, not as monuments meriting reverence.

39 Livy at 35.51.1, of the Temple of Apollo in Delium, and Tacitus at *Hist.* 3.71.1, also of the forum's temples, a passage to which I return below. Heubner (1963–1982) on 1.40.2 notes that Tacitus takes the phrase from Livy 7.6.4. Livy uses *immineo* of buildings also at 1.33.8, 2.33.7, 3.7.2, 24.7.3, and 31.25.2. At *Hist.* 3.70.1 Tacitus describes Vitellius' brother's home as *imminentem foro*.

Though majestic temples do not yet overhang the Forum, the *religio* of the place is already felt. In the ensuing lines (8.351–354), Evander describes to Aeneas how local residents claim to have seen Jove himself (already) inhabiting this location (*Arcades ipsum* | *credunt se uidisse Iouem*, 8.352–353). The point is that Rome's center, the Capitol, always has and always will be overseen by a divine power, and the terrifying *religio* of the spot assures the piety of all those who occupy it.

The reverence of that spot—timeless and eternal in Virgil's telling—vanishes on that day when Roman soldiers storm the Roman Forum and, in view of the Capitol (*Capitolii aspectus*), attack their emperor. The pairing of *religio* and *terreo* is extraordinary,[40] and seems to confirm that Tacitus is here directing us to Virgil's passage. He does so, we see, in order to mark a sharp degeneration, and the allusion works in tandem with the Livian one, each underlining the gross inversion of *religio* practiced by Galba's attackers on that day.[41]

However, in 1.40.2 Tacitus may not be faulting only the emperor's human attackers. The phrase *Capitolii aspectus* can describe both the soldiers' view of the Capitolium (as I have read it thus far) *and* the Capitolium's view of the soldiers, with the genitive *Capitolii* operating subjectively and *aspectus* actively.[42] In this reading, the active "sight" of the Capitol—that is, the eyes of its divine inhabitants Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva—is made to look upon the scene in the Forum and to actively, willfully *not* frighten the Othonians from committing the crime. We may also see a marker of divine disfavor in the adjacent phrase in the sentence, *imminentium templorum religio*, which

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40 The only other author who makes *religio* the subject of *terreo* is Augustine, at *Quaestiones in Heptateuchum* 2.171. It appears once as the subject of a compound of *terreo*, at Apuleius, *Met.* 10.3: *nec te religio patris omnino deterreat*.

41 Chilver (1979) 100 (followed by Edwards (1996) 77; see too Ash (2007b) 229) suggests that with the phrase *priores et futuri principes* Tacitus "may be actually invoking the sight his readers could see—the statues (including those of later emperors) which were on the Capitol." Such a reading would lend to the sentence more of the timelessness that we find at *Aen.* 8.347–350, and call greater attention to the soldiers' irreverence. But Morgan (1994a) 244 is probably correct in stating that this phrase merely refers to the cycle of vengeance brought on by assassinations, referred to at the end of this sentence (*cuius ... successit*) and again at 1.44.2.

42 As Ash (2007b) 228–229 has observed, writing that "these two coexisting readings combine forcefully to raise the emotional stakes and to bring out strongly the amoral character of the Othonian soldiers." She goes on conclude that "the personified Capitoline temple remains only a voyeur, looking on helplessly as an emperor is murdered in cold blood below" (229). In my quite different reading, the temple's inaction here is not the result of just helplessness. Gerber and Greef (1903) 103 catalog Tacitus' uses of *aspectus* actively (17 times) and passively (16 times), and consider the use at 1.40.2 as only a passive one.

is also a subject of *terruere*. Are the other temples not just hanging over the human actors below but also *threatening* them—another resonance of *immineo*?[43] The implication is that it is not only the attacking soldiers who are to blame for their actions that day, but also the Roman gods for their malevolent *inaction*, their failure to intercede and deter.

Such a blaming of the gods, alongside humans, for the horrors of January 15 is consistent with the impassioned statements that Tacitus makes at 1.3.2, 2.38.2, and 3.72.1, which I discussed in Chapter 1 as akin to the blaming of divine anger by the epic poets. Recall that at 1.3.2 Tacitus introduces all of the disasters that are to come in his narrative as the result of divine punishment: *nec enim umquam atrocioribus populi Romani cladibus magisue iustis indiciis adprobatum est non esse curae deis securitatem nostram, esse* **ultionem**. When he writes at 1.40.2 that the sight / eyes of the Capitol and the sanctity of the overhanging / threatening temples did not frighten the attackers "from committing a crime whose avenger is whoever takes the office next" (*quo minus facerent scelus cuius* **ultor** *est quisquis successit*), perhaps Tacitus is following up on the programmatic statement made at 1.3.2, and reminding the reader of the gods' complicity in the period's cycle of vengeance. Is this, consent to the emergence of a human avenger and thus to the perpetutation of Rome's cycle of vengeance, what the temples are threatening? If so, then Tacitus' faulting of divine ill-will here would work closely in concert with his evocation, and his characters' swift subversion, of the awesomeness of the Capitolium at *Aeneid* 8.347–350. The point that emerges is that acts of sacrilege and irreverence, such as the attack in the Forum before the eyes of the gods on January 15, are met only and immediately by reciprocal gestures of ill-will—in this case, seeing but not interceding—from the gods. And so the succession of vengeance and disaster, with gods and men alike perpetuating it, presses on.

Galba's Death Lives On

We see in the reference at 1.40.2 to an avenger for Galba that, before the execution of his murder is complete, Tacitus is already anticipating the demise of Otho. He returns to the subject of vengeance at 1.44.2, with the statement that later on Vitellius will execute all involved in the murders of January 15, "not to honor Galba, but in the traditional practice of emperors,

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[43] "Threaten" is in fact the meaning of *immineo* that Tacitus uses most often (Gerber and Greef (1903) 566–567). In the *Hist.* see 1.43.2, 1.86.3, 2.14.1, 2.58.1, 3.76.1, 4.15.3, and 4.34.5.

which assures safety for the present, and vengeance [for their own deaths] in the future" (*non honore Galbae, sed tradito principibus more munimentum ad praesens, in posterum ultionem*). In this narrative "fast-forward," Tacitus forecasts not just Vitellius' usurpation of Otho, but also Vitellius' anticipation of his own assassination, and the further violence that *should* follow that act. The penetrating forward glances at 1.40.2 and 1.44.2 are unique to Tacitus' account, and serve to brace the reader for the fleetingness of victory and constancy of vengeance in the subsequent narrative.[44]

While Tacitus looks ominously ahead from the vantage of Galba's murder-site, in a complementary gesture he also will lead the reader back to that spot, the Lacus Curtius, again and again in the following books.[45] As we shall see shortly, at 3.85 Vitellius ends up there, killed in a manner that Tacitus crafts to mirror Galba's death. But the historian is sure to make two other visits to the Lacus Curtius on his way towards Vitellius' death. At 2.55.1 he records the events of the *ludi Ceriales*, during which honors are paid to Galba:

> populus cum lauru ac floribus Galbae imagines circum templa tulit, congestis in modum tumuli coronis iuxta lacum Curtii, quem locum Galba moriens sanguine infecerat.
>
> The people carried around the temples images of Galba, adorned with laurels and flowers, and garlands were piled up like a tomb beside the Lacus Curtius, which in his death Galba had defiled with his blood.

Tacitus' language here for the defilement of the Lacus Curtius (*sanguine infecerat*) recalls the imagery he used at 1.26.1, where the murder is cast as a foul bloodying (*foedare ... sanguine*) of the republic itself. The point of emphasis in each of these passages and, as we have seen, in the account of the murder itself (1.40–41) is that this was an act of desecration. This—the defilement of sacred ground—is what Tacitus chooses to memorialize in 2.55, and thus to keep alive in his readers' minds. At 2.88.3 Vitellius' German soldiers arrive at Rome; and, whereas in Josephus' account of their arrival they marvel at the city's silver and gold,[46] Tacitus has the Germans head right to the Lacus Curtius: *forum maxime petebant cupidine uisendi locum in quo Galba iacuisset* ("Most of all they were looking for the forum, in their

[44] Of these foreshadowings Keitel (2006) 243 writes: "Tacitus thus suggests with both economy and effectiveness the futility of civil strife and a seemingly endless cycle of violence that follows the apparent victory."

[45] Scott (1968) 59–61.

[46] Josephus, *BJ* 4.587 (noted by Ash (2007a) ad loc.).

desire to visit the spot where Galba had fallen"). For Tacitus' Germans, as for his readers, that spot now stands as an abiding monument not of Marcus Curtius' *deuotio*, but of the sacrilegious murder of the emperor.

The murder itself is then repeated in the chaotic concluding chapters of Book 3. In both of the featured death-scenes here, those of Vespasian's brother Flavius Sabinus (3.73–74) and Vitellius (3.84.4–85), we are made to think of Galba's narrative-defining death in Book 1. After the Vitellian army has stormed the Capitol, Sabinus' powerless submission to external forces is described with language that closely recalls Galba's fateful ride to death: compare **huc illuc** *clamoribus hostium* **circumagi** (3.73.1: "he is driven about here and there by the shouts of the enemy") with **agebatur huc illuc** *Galba uario turbae fluctuantis impulsu* (1.40.1: "Galba was being driven here and there by the varying impulses of the wavering crowd"). Both victims are also unarmed when met by their attackers (*inermem* at 1.40.2 and 3.73.2); and each is eventually beheaded, and described with blunt finality as a *truncum corpus* (1.41.3 and 3.74.2).[47]

Ten chapters later comes Vitellius' similarly Galba-like death. Now, many of the narrative similarities between 3.84.4–85 and 1.35–41 appear in other sources in the parallel tradition, such as the emperors' ride on a sedan chair, the desecration of their images, and the subjection of their bodies to mocking abuse (*ludibrium*).[48] But Tacitus brings to mind Galba's death in a few unique and meaningful ways. Firstly, while both Suetonius and Tacitus describe the tearing apart of the chained Vitellius' clothes, for this act Suetonius uses the verb *discindo* (*Vit.* 17.1), while Tacitus uses *lanio*: **laniata** *ueste*, **foedum** *spectaculum, ducebatur* (3.84.5: "With his clothes torn to pieces—a foul spectacle—he was led forward"). *Lanio* is a much more precise and violent verb,[49] and also the verb he used of the tearing apart of

[47] No other source provides an account of Sabinus' death. Wallace (1987) 356 notes the parallel in *truncum corpus*, and also suggests that Sabinus' *segnitia*, observed at 3.73.1 and 3.75.1, recalls the mention of this quality in Galba's obituary (1.49.3). But, as I discussed above, in his death-scene at least, Galba confronts adversity with alacrity and (Priam-like) resolve.

[48] Sedan chair: of Galba at *Hist.* 1.35.1, 1.41.2 and Plutarch, *Galb.* 26.2 and 27.1; of Vitellius at *Hist.* 3.84.4 and Suet., *Vit.* 16. Desecration of images: of Galba at *Hist.* 1.41.1 and Plutarch, *Galb.* 26.4; of Vitellius at *Hist.* 3.85 and Dio 65.21.2. Abuse: of Galba at *Hist.* 1.41.3 and 1.49.1, Suet. *Galb.* 20.2, Plutarch, *Galb.* 27.2–3 and Dio 64.6.3; of Vitellius at *Hist.* 3.84.5–85.1 and Suet., *Vit.* 17.

[49] Oakley (2009b), in his discussion of the authors' parallel accounts of Vitellius' death (206–211), notes the emphatic initial position of the "striking" *laniata* in Tacitus' phrase, whereas "Suetonius' *ueste discissa* offers a less striking verb in a more normal position" (210). Twice Tacitus uses *lanio* of animals tearing at humans, at *Hist.* 2.61.1 and *Ann.* 15.44.4. On Vitellus' death-scene see also Levene (1997) 144–147 and Ash (2007b) 220–224.

Galba's limbs at 1.41.3: *ceteri crura brachiaque* … **foede laniauere** (1.41.3: "The rest foully tore to pieces his legs and arms"). The repetition of this jarring verb, with a form of *foedus* modifying each act as well, hints that a similarly gruesome "pile-on" murder is coming to Vitellius too.[50]

Secondly, unlike in any other account of Vitellius' death, Tacitus specifically mentions Galba and his death-site. This is at 3.85:

> Vitellium infestis mucronibus coactum modo erigere os et offerre contumeliis, nunc cadentis statuas suas, plerumque rostra aut Galbae occisi locum contueri, postremo ad Gemonias, ubi corpus Flauii Sabini iacuerat, propulere.
>
> Vitellius was forced by threatening swords first to hold up his face and expose it to insults, then to behold his falling statues and most of all the rostra and the place of the murdered Galba; at last they drove him to the Gemoniae, where the corpse of Flavius Sabinus had lain.

In a striking detail, Vitellius' captors force him to gaze at (*contueri*) the site now held—note the possessive genitive—by the murdered Galba. This is the only appearance of the forceful compound *contueor* in the *Histories*.[51] With it and with the great level of focused detail in the scene, Tacitus leads the reader, I suggest, to gaze upon Vitellius' own act of gazing and reflecting upon Galba's death, and thus to join him in the reflective—if unsettling—process. And the reminder here of Sabinus' recent murder enhances the richness of the reflection: Galba's seminal death, doubly repeated in the sequential murders of Sabinus and Vitellius, will not stop occurring, will not die.

Galba and the Capitol: Repetitions

The most significant repetition of Galba's death takes place just before Sabinus' and Vitellius' murders, and in fact leads directly to them. This is the civil wars'—and the *Histories*'—climactic event, the burning of the Capitol in 3.71–72. Given the centrality of this event in Tacitus' work, the series of repetitions and escalations in these chapters may invite us to look back upon the account of Galba's death as, to use a term from Homeric narratology,[52]

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[50] And it does, at 3.85: *ac deinde ingestis uolneribus concidit. et uolgus eadem prauitate insectabatur interfectum, qua fouerat uiuentem.*

[51] It appears twice in the *Ann.*, at 1.43.4 and 13.55.3.

[52] See Fenik (1968) 213–215. An example (discussed by Rengakos (2006) 208) is Achilles' allowance of the burial of Eetion (recalled by Andromache at *Il.* 6.416–420), which foreshadows his similar allowance of the burial of Hector in *Il.* 24. A Virgilian example is Aeneas' disregard and killing of the suppliant Magus, who appeals to Aeneas' filial piety, at *Aen.* 10.521–536, anticipating the similar exchange with Turnus at the end of *Aen.* 12.

an anticipatory doublet of the death of the Capitol. The decapitation of the head of state that opens the year, and the work, prefigures and braces us for the greater, all-encompassing beheading of the Capitol (← *caput*) and of Rome herself that concludes the year.[53]

The verbal repetitions linking the two deaths are many. In the moments leading up to each catastrophe, Tacitus captures the confusion and cowardice on the side of the attacked with similar remarks on the mismatch between words and deeds. Of the Flavians who are about to take refuge on the Capitol he writes: "As happens in situations such as this, advice was given by all, but few took on the danger" (3.69.2: *sed quod in eius modi rebus accidit, consilium ab omnibus datum est, periculum pauci sumpsere*). He had made a comparably damning remark about Galba's entourage at 1.35.1: "Each of the most cowardly men and, as the matter demonstrated, in danger unwillingly to take any risk, was excessive in his words, fierce of tongue. No one knew anything, but all were asserting things" (*ignauissimus quisque et, ut res docuit, in periculo non ausurus, nimii uerbis, linguae feroces; nemo scire et omnes adfirmare*). Later, the undisciplined character of the invading Vitellians is presented in language that mirrors the earlier characterization of the motley crew of Galba's killers: *nullo duce, sibi quisque auctor* ("there was no leader, each man was in charge of himself") at 3.71.1 echoes the judgment made at 1.38.3, *sibi quisque dux et instigator* ("each man was his own leader and instigator"). Most significantly, as the Vitellians march towards the Capitol, Tacitus sets the scene with the very same hallowed imagery that he used on Galba's death day. The troops "in a quick column pass by the forum and the temples that overhang the forum" (3.71.1: *cito agmine forum et imminentia foro templa praeteruecti*), and we are made to recall the failure of these monuments to deter the Othonians from attacking Galba (1.40.2: *nec … Capitolii aspectus et imminentium templorum religio*)—a failure certain to be repeated here.[54]

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[53] Woodman (1997) 96: "the destruction of the Capitol denoted the destruction of the metaphorical head of the body politic … It is a graphic symbol of the suicide which is civil war." Tacitus refers to Rome as the *caput rerum* at *Hist.* 2.32.2. On the personification of the Capitol and the city here, see too MacL. Currie (1989) 352 ("It is treated as a living being") and Ash (2007b) 233, who notes the significance of the adjective *deformis* being applied to the decapitated Rome at *Hist.* 3.83.2 (and also at Suet., *Vesp.* 8.5). At 4.39.4 Tacitus writes of the return to Rome of its *forma* (though in a premature pronouncement of restoration, as I discuss in the Epilogue). The reader is seemingly prepared for the metaphor of self-decaptitation in the table of contents, at 1.2.2: *ipso Capitolio ciuium manibus incenso*. "[T]he citizen body literally destroys its own head," writes Evans (2003) 270 n. 39.

[54] Poulle (1998) 313–314 and Ash (2007b) 226–229 (see further note 35 above) similarly regard the mention of the Capitol at 1.40.2 as anticipatory of 3.71–72. Walker (1976) 115

And the targets of the two attacks, Galba and the Capitol, have fundamental similarities. Like the emperor, the Capitol stands out for its lineage. Twice in Book 1 we read of Galba's noble ancestry (1.15.1; and 1.49.2: *uetus in familia nobilitas*), an emphasis also found in the temple's obituary in 3.72, most of which is committed to the great figures from Rome's past who funded, built, and maintained the Capitolium. Both Galba and the Capitol can even boast of descent from the great Quintus Lutatius Catulus (1.15.1 and 3.72.3).[55]

This lengthy account of the building's history in 3.72, along with the conspicuous use of the adverb *antiquitus* for the structures abutting the temple (3.71.2),[56] also serves to play up the Capitol's old age, another quality it shares with Galba. And Tacitus is sure to note that, for both of these victims, their antiquity was a source of harm. Galba was old, and thus frail (1.6.1: *inualidum senem*) and a laughing-stock (1.7.3: *ipsa aetas Galbae inrisui ac fastidio erat*, "Galba's age itself was a source of derision and loathing"). But he was also old-fashioned in his demands for discipline and in his hesitation at buying off the troops. This was decidedly to his detriment, as we read at 1.18.3: *nocuit antiquus rigor et nimia seueritas* ("His ancient rigor and excessive sternness were a source of harm"). The Capitol's eld and status as a symbol of the old ways of the Republic similarly meant nothing to those who set it on fire. Indeed, when describing the Capitol's collapse, Tacitus appears to emphasize not just the failure of the Capitol's antiquity, but the *responsibility* of it for the building's death: *mox sustinentes fastigium aquilae uetere ligno traxerunt flammam alueruntque* (3.71.3: "Soon the eagles [i.e., beams] holding up the roof, because of their old wood, caught and fed the flames"). Just as with Galba earlier in the *Histories*, the temple's old wood—its antiquity, its tradition, its vintage—was a fatal flaw.[57]

In each of these deaths the disregard for tradition and for Rome's sacred places is a thing of outrage. But, while Galba's murder in sight of the Capitol is "disgraceful"—note *foede laniauere* at 1.41.3, presaged at 1.18.1 (*foedum imbribus diem*, of the day of Piso's adoption) and 1.26.1 (*foedare*)[58]—the burning of the Capitol itself by Roman hands is "the most disgraceful"

remarks: "The emperor's murder begins a chain of violence which will lead to the burning of the Capitol in 3.72."

55 As Poulle (1998) 314 also notes.

56 3.71.2: *erant antiquitus porticus in latere cliui dextrae subeuntibus* ("There were from ancient times colonnades on the side of the hill, to the right of those coming up").

57 Sailor (2008) 216 notes this parallel in the harmful old age of Galba and the Capitol.

58 On which see above in this chapter.

(*foedissimum*) event in Rome's history. And, though the view of Galba's murder scene was "mournful" (*lugubri prospectu*, 1.40.1), the Capitol's burning was "the most mournful" (*luctuosissimum*) thing to ever befall Rome. Tacitus' full judgment, given greater weight through an expansive allusion to Sallust's remark about how evil a crime Catiline's revolution *could* have been,[59] bears repeating: *id facinus post conditam urbem luctuosissimum foedissimumque rei publicae populi Romani accidit* (3.72.1: "This was the most mournful and most disgraceful event that has happened to the commonwealth of the Roman people since the founding of the city"). We see from this climactic sentence that, as much as the burning of the Capitol mirrors its doublet in the first act, it also emphatically surpasses it—and indeed all other disasters. The repetition of Galba's death in the death of the Capitol is representative of the general repetitive arc of the *Histories*: the disasters and deaths in these civil wars only get bigger, greater, worse.

I offer one further suggestion about the correspondence between Galba's and the Capitol's deaths. Above I proposed that Tacitus presents the divine inhabitants of the Capitol as unresponsive and thus complicit eyewitnesses (recall *Capitolii aspectus* at 1.40.2) to the horrors in the Forum on January 15. Here in 3.71–72, as the temple itself, the Capitoline Triad's residence in Rome, is burnt down, Tacitus implies a similar but even more malicious divine complicity. At 3.72.1 he expounds on the enormity of the event:

> nullo externo hoste, propitiis, si per mores nostros liceret, deis, sedem Iovis Optimi Maximi auspicato a maioribus pignus imperii conditam, quam non Porsenna dedita urbe neque Galli capta temerare potuissent, furore principum excindi.
>
> By no foreign enemy, with favorable—if only our behavior had allowed—gods, the seat of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, founded under the augury of our ancestors as the pledge of empire, which Porsenna could not desecrate when the city was handed to him, nor the Gauls when the city was captured, was destroyed by the madness of our emperors.

As on the day of Galba's murder, the gods' inaction is stressed here. In the statement that they *would have* been favorable if Roman behavior had allowed (*propitiis, si per mores nostros liceret, deis*), it is made clear that the gods did not offer their favor or aid on that day. The reference in the next phrase to the auspices that attended the foundation of the temple

[59] Sall., *BC* 18.8: *quod ni Catilina maturasset pro curia signum sociis dare, eo die post conditam urbem Romam pessumum facinus patratum foret*. In Tacitus' emulative adaptation, one superlative becomes two, and the contrafactual becomes the actual.

(*auspicato*) further highlights, by contrast, the divine absence from the events of December 19. And the description of the temple as "the seat of Jupiter Optimus Maximus" surely makes the reader think of the anthropomorphic character Jupiter, who has gotten up from his seat and left, uninterested in preserving his residence among—and relationship with—the Romans.

On top of these indications of divine withdrawal, Tacitus may also point to the gods taking a more proactive role in the temple's destruction, a demonstration of the elevated hostility towards Rome that they are feeling by year's end. As we saw above, Tacitus has the temple's *aquilae* play an active part in the conflagration: *mox sustinentes fastigium aquilae uetere ligno traxerunt flammam alueruntque* (3.71.4). Ash has discussed how the attribution of agency to the *aquilae*, the roof's support structures[60] contributes to the sense that the building's death is "a form of cataclysmic suicide."[61] But in encountering this word the reader certainly also thinks of the eagle's status as the bird of Jupiter, and indeed as the god's lightning-bearer.[62] With this statement, then, is Tacitus implicating not just the building's role in its own death, but also, more precisely, its most important inhabitant's involvement? In the sentence immediately preceding this one the historian had expressed uncertainty about which side, the attacking Vitellians or the besieged Flavians, had started the fire (3.71.4).[63] Perhaps the reference here to the role of the *aquilae* in the fire directs us to another, higher alternative. It is just a few lines after this that, as I have discussed above, Tacitus raises the issue of the gods' disfavor at the time (3.72.1).

This third possible explanation for the burning of the Capitol—that the gods themselves were responsible—is in fact given voice later in the *His-*

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60 *Hist.* 3.71.4 is the only passage cited by the *OLD* (4) and the *TLL* (2.372.74–75) for *aquila* as "pars tecti." The word choice is striking.

61 Ash (2007b) 232, whose full quote reads: "it appears that even the temple has been caught up in the collective madness of civil war, as the wholesale personification implicit in the earlier image of the *Capitolii aspectus* (1.40.2), looking down on the soldiers from on high, engages in a form of cataclysmic suicide." Baxter (1971) 103–104 considers the irony of the destructive role of the *aquilae*, in that eagles adorned Roman standareds, and so the eagle is "the symbol of Rome's supremacy over her enemies" (104).

62 See Pliny, *NH* 2.146, Servius ad *Aen.* 1.394, and further references at *TLL* 2.370.69–371.3.

63 3.71.4: *hic ambigitur, ignem tectis obpugnatores iniecerint, an obsessi, quae crebrior fama, nitentes ac progressos depulerint.* This statement of uncertainty, which is complicated by the charge against the Vitellians at 3.73.2 and the Flavian Atticus' admission of guilt at 3.75.3, is to be contrasted with the reports by Josephus (*BJ* 4.649), Suetonius (*Vit.* 15.3), and Dio (65.17.3) that the Vitellians alone were responsible for the fire. On the matter see further Wellesley (1972) 16–18, who concludes that Tacitus' account "suffers in clarity by concessions to literary and stylistic requirements" (18).

tories. At 4.54.2, during a report of Gallic support for Civilis' revolt, Tacitus writes of a prophecy that the Druids were chanting:

> captam olim a Gallis urbem, sed integra Iouis sede mansisse imperium: fatali nunc igne signum caelestis irae datum et possessionem rerum humanarum Transalpinis gentibus portendi superstitione uana Druidae canebant.
>
> The Druids were chanting, in empty superstition, that the city had been captured by the Gauls once, but, with the seat of Jove untouched, their power remained; that now, in that fatal fire, a mark of the anger of the heavens was given; and that possession of all humanity was portended for the Transalpine nations.

Tacitus is quick to discredit the Druids' chants as empty superstition (*superstitione uana*), and their prediction of global domination for the Gauls is of course wildly off. But their reading of the burning of the Capitol as a mark of the anger of the heavens (*signum caelestis irae*) seems to echo the charge of divine complicity made in 3.71–72 and, as we have seen, in a more general way at other key points in the *Histories* (1.3.2, 2.38.2).[64] By reprinting the charge here in 4.54, and in fact making it more explicit, Tacitus allows the image of the gods in heaven striking the Capitolium with fire to stay with the reader, to live on past the end of the war proper, and even past the account of the restoration and consecration of the temple in 4.53. Tacitus already subverts 4.53's tone of resolution and return to order by immediately following this episode with notice of the doubling and escalation of Civilis' (quite civil) war (4.54.1).[65] The lingering image of the heavens' fiery anger that comes just afterwards has a similarly discomforting effect.

A Fall Worse than Troy's

The points of emphasis in *Histories* 3.71–72 that I have explored here are underlined, again, by the presence of Virgil. Just as in Book 1 Tacitus casts Galba as another Priam, in a few pointed ways he stages the fall of the Capitol as a degenerative repetition of the fall of Priam's city, Troy. Correspon-

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[64] See also Sailor (2008) 230–232 on the meaningfulness of the Druids' prophecy for Tacitus' narrative. Davies (2004) 169 n. 86 discards the reference at 4.54.2 as "[m]istaken interpretation of the burning of the Capitol."

[65] See my discussion in Chapter 1 on the meaningfulness of the placement of Civilis' revolt in Tacitus' narrative. On further complications to the restorative tone of 4.53, see Sailor (2008) 218–229. Tacitus' readers knew that the temple consecrated in 70 would last only until another fire in 80, at which time Domitian's very different new temple replaced it.

dences with *Aeneid* 2 have been noted by many readers of this episode.[66] Perhaps the richest is at 3.71.2,[67] where Tacitus describes the response of Sabinus, who is besieged on the Capitol, to the invading Vitellians:

> ambustasque Capitolii fores penetrassent, ni Sabinus reuulsas undique statuas, **decora maiorum**, in ipso aditu uice muri obiecisset.
>
> [The Vitellians] would have burst through the half-burnt doors of the Capitol, if Sabinus had not pulled down from everywhere statues—memorials of their elders—and thrown them out as a wall-like obstruction to the entryway itself.

This episode appears to be a Tacitean invention: no such act takes place in the shorter accounts of the Capitol's burning in Suetonius (*Vitellius* 15.3) and Dio (65.17.3). And, in a picture that may originate from the same source but is quite different from Tacitus', Josephus has the Vitellian attackers loot the temple's ἀναθήματα, "ornaments" or "votive offerings" (*BJ* 4.649). The source for Tacitus' arrangement of the material seems to be *Aeneid* 2.445–449, where the Trojans in Priam's palace react to the Greek invasion in much the same way:

> Dardanidae contra turris ac tota domorum
> culmina conuellunt; his se, quando ultima cernunt,
> extrema iam in morte parant defendere telis,
> auratasque trabes, **ueterum decora** alta **parentum**,
> deuoluunt.
>
> The descendants of Dardanus, in response [to the attacking Greeks], pull down the towers and all the palace's roof tiles; with these as weapons—since they understand that the end is near—they prepare to defend themselves even to the moment of death, and they roll down the gilded beams, the high ornaments of their old ancestors.

The proud patronymic *Dardanidae* (2.445) carries some irony, in light of the actions that the descendants of Daradanus are taking: tearing down anything—even the golden beams that reflect the success and glory of their ancestors—in order to stave off the Greeks. With the Capitol under siege, Tacitus has Sabinus do the same, as once again items of tradition and glory are put to desperate and ignoble use.

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[66] So Mackail (1895) 219: "The narrative of the siege and firing of the Capitol … is plainly from the hand of a writer saturated with the movement and language of Virgil's *Sack of Troy*." Baxter (1971) 102–103 compares Tacitus' use of the verbs *inuado, ingruo, scando*, and *labor* at 3.71.3–4 with Virgil's employment of these verbs in *Aen.* 2. But he does little to demonstrate the extraordinariness (both within the authors' texts, and in the Latin corpus) of these as verbs of attack.

[67] Noted by Heubner (1963–1982) and Wellesley (1972) ad loc.; and Austin (1964) 178. Baxter (1971) 102, Wallace (1987) 355, and Foucher (2000) 419–420 also mention this allusion.

At the center of the reworking of Virgil's passage is the peculiar phrase *decora maiorum*, which lies in apposition to the tumbled statues. This collocation appears just twice elsewhere, and in those passages of something very different, military achievements.[68] Tacitus' usage of the phrase is closest to Virgil's *ueterum decora alta parentum*, which the poet uses in apposition to the gilded beams that support Priam's palace. Like the contexts, the two usages are indeed very similar, but there is a bold and degenerative difference in Tacitus' passage. By taking what is inherent in Virgil's phrase and applying it not to a structure's beams but to the statues of Roman elders, Tacitus brings greater poignancy and a more personal sense of dissolution to his scene. What he now depicts is the Roman Sabinus tearing down images of great Romans in order to ward off a Roman army attacking Rome's Capitol! Tradition—literally embodied in the statues, the *decora maiorum*—is the greatest victim here, so easily, almost incidentally, pulled down and put to inglorious use.[69] As Austin notes, the element of self-destruction is already present in Virgil's passage.[70] On this Tacitus seizes, and, through his ingenious reapplication of the phrase *decora maiorum*, creates an unforgettable moment in his Fall of Rome.

Soon afterwards, as he attempts to illustrate just how egregious and unprecedented the destruction of the Capitol was, Tacitus reminds the reader of the great enemies in Rome's past who failed to destroy the building. I reprint part of 3.72.1, which I have translated above:

> sedem Iovis Optimi Maximi auspicato a maioribus pignus imperii conditam, quam non Porsenna dedita urbe neque Galli capta temerare potuissent, furore principum excindi.

In demonstrating the (now trampled) antiquity of the temple, Tacitus appeals again to the *maiores* so closely associated with the building. He will specifically name many of the temple's foundational (Tarquinius Priscus, Servius Tullius, Tarquinius Superbus, Horatius Pulvillus) and re-foundational figures (Sulla, Catulus) later in 3.72, in his review of the temple's six-hundred-year history. Perhaps even more effective in expressing the vintage

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68 At Curtius Rufus 5.8.16, in a pre-battle speech by Darius to the Persians; and at Justin 30.4.13, similarly in a pre-battle speech by the Roman general Flaminius. Also echoing Virgil's phrase (in what Austin (1964) 178 calls "a strange echo") is Statius, *Theb*. 5.424, where the Argonauts themselves are *magnorum decora alta patrum*.

69 Ash (2007b) 231 also comments on the "sense of transgression" here, but without reference to the Virgilian allusion.

70 Austin (1964) 177–178: "Virgil conveys with much pathos the immemorial antiquity and beauty of Priam's house, now being destroyed by his own people in self-defence."

and long-indestructible might of the temple is the attention he gives to specific enemies of Rome who were unable to capture the temple. Mackail[71] has compared Tacitus' evocation of the Etruscan aggressor Porsenna and the Gauls to Virgil's method at *Aeneid* 2.195–198, just after the Greek Sinon has persuaded the Trojans to lead the horse into their city:

> Talibus insidiis periurique arte Sinonis
> credita res, captique dolis lacrimisque coactis
> pquos neque Tydides nec Larisaeus Achilles,
> pnon anni domuere decem, non mille carinae.
>
> Through such a plot and through the skill of the liar Sinon, this story was believed; and by trickery and phony tears we were captured—we whom neither Tydides, nor Achilles of Larissa, nor ten years, nor a thousand ships conquered.

The failure of Greece's greatest warriors Diomedes and Achilles to take Troy over those ten years stands as a testament to the strength of Troy, which fell to an unexpected foe, the devious Sinon. The parallel to Sinon's guile in *Histories* 3.72.1 is the *furor principum*. Like Sinon, this foe is unexpected: Tacitus withholds mention of it until the end of his sentence. But the surprise here exceeds the surprise of Sinon's success, since the destroyers of Rome's Capitol are revealed to be not an external enemy but *Romans themselves*. Worse still, it is Rome's leaders, her maddened *principes*, that are responsible. Far more troubling than the conquest of Troy by foreign deceit, Rome falls when her emperors—make that the principate itself[72]—becomes overwhelmed by the *furor* of civil war.

More War (and More Virgil) at Rome

In the scenes that follow the burning of the Capitol in *Histories* 3.71–72, Tacitus continues to recall and build upon moments from the *Aeneid*'s wars. The Capitol's end marks a climax, but the fighting in the city between the

[71] Mackail (1895) 219. Austin (1964) 83 describes *Aen.* 2.195–198 as written "in the historical manner" and compares our Tacitean passage, as well as Livy, 5.22.8, of the sack of Veii. Livy's passage is quite different, referring to the length of the siege (*decem aestates hiemesque continuas*), but not evoking specific names as Virgil and Tacitus do. Mankin (1995) 247 (noted by Ash (1999) 190) suggests that both Virgil at *Aen.* 2.195–198 and Tacitus at *Hist.* 3.72.1 are echoing Horace, *Epode* 16.3–10, a list of the foreign enemies who failed to defeat Rome, which is now destroying itself in civil war.

[72] See further my discussion of this phrase in Chapter 1, with reference to Sailor (2008) 209–210.

Vitellians and Flavians is at its most spirited in the final struggle at 3.82–84. The carnage and chaos of those chapters are anticipated by the violation of a wartime custom in 3.81. In that chapter Tacitus writes of a letter that Vitellius sends to the Flavian general Antonius Primus, whose army is quickly approaching Rome and prepared to take the city. Vitellius asks for a delay in combat, but his wish is not granted: *Vitellio rescriptum Sabini caede et incendio Capitoli* **dirempta belli commercia** (3.81.2: "The response written back to Vitellius was that the normal negotiations of war had been wiped out by the murder of Sabinus and the burning of the Capitol"). Commentators have noted the correspondence between this passage and a scene from the thick of the Latin War.[73] At *Aeneid* 10.524–529 the Rutulian Magus grabs onto his opponent Aeneas' knees and offers him talents of silver and gold in exchange for his life. The unbent Aeneas responds to the suppliant: **belli commercia** *Turnus | sustulit ista prior iam tum Pallante* **perempto** (*Aeneid* 10.532–533: "Turnus was the first to lift those normal negotiations of war, when he did away with Pallas").

The situations on the Tacitean and Virgilian battlefields are very similar: Antonius Primus refuses Vitellius the *belli commercia* because of the Vitellians' murder of Sabinus and destruction of the Capitol; Aeneas denies Magus the *belli commercia* because of Turnus' murder of Pallas. Suetonius (*Vitellius* 16) and Dio (65.18.3–19.1) also recount Vitellius' appeal to Antonius, but do not include any of the details from Antonius' unwavering reply that we find in the *Histories*. And only Virgil, who seems to have invented the collocation,[74] and Tacitus, who writes it again at *Annals* 14.33.2, use the phrase *belli commercia*.[75] Furthermore, Virgil's use of a participial form of *emo* for the wiping away of Pallas (*Pallante perempto*) may have influenced Tacitus' application of a similar form (*dirempta*) to the easily dismissed *belli commercia*. These verbal links direct our focus to the narrative parallels: between the pleading but ultimately hopeless Vitellius and Magus, between the unmoved Antonius and Aeneas, and, fundamentally, in the breakdown of order in the conduct of war, replaced in each work by heightened levels of rashness and brutality.[76]

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[73] Brady (1874) 235, Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc., Wellesley (1972) ad loc., and Ash (1999) 123–124 note the correspondence.

[74] Harrison (1991) on 10.532–533 calls *belli commercia* "a striking juxtaposition." He follows Skutsch (1985) 350 in suggesting that Virgil's phrase is a reworking of Ennius' *cauponantes bellum* at *Ann.* 184.

[75] At *Ann.* 14.33.2 Tacitus writes of the relentless Britons: *neque enim capere aut uenundare aliudue quod belli commercium …festinabant.*

[76] As I observe in note 52 above, Aeneas' dismissal of the suppliant Magus anticipates

When the Flavians reach Rome, recklessness and slaughter are indeed what ensue. The city is a carnival of crimes: *saeua ac deformis urbe tota facies: alibi proelia et uulnera, alibi balineae popinaeque; simul cruor et strues corporum, iuxta scorta et scortis similes* (3.83.2: "Savage and shapeless was the appearance of the whole city: here are battles and body-blows, there baths and bars; blood and heaps of bodies were right next to prostitutes and those as good as prostitutes"). Three times in Tacitus' vivid, visceral portrait of Rome on December 20 (3.82–85) the historian points us, again, to Virgil's falling Troy. At 3.82.3 one unit of Flavians errs in entering the city from the east, "through the narrow and slippery parts of the roadways" (*per* **angusta** *et lubrica* **uiarum**), where they are attacked by Vitellians with rocks and spears (*saxis pilisque*). The passage reads like a replay of the sticky situation the Trojans met at *Aeneid* 2.332–333, where "some [of the Greeks] guarded the narrow parts of the roadways with confronting weapons" (*obsedere alii telis* **angusta uiarum** | *oppositis*).[77] Dio's account of this battle (65.19.3) includes some of the same elements, though the details are arranged differently.[78] What we may witness again at 3.82.3 is Tacitus molding his material, fitting a significant Virgilian allusion, one that helps to cast his Fall of Rome as another Fall of Troy, to the basic narrative outline provided by his source.

Later, in the immediate aftermath of the Flavian victory, Tacitus describes Vitellius' last moments (3.84.4–3.85), including his retreat to the palace, where he is seized and dragged off to death by the tribune Julius Placidus. Tacitus captures the atmosphere in the palace with characteristic concision: **terret** *solitudo et* **tacentes** *loci*; *tempat clausa*, **inhorrescit** *uacuis* (3.84.4: "The solitude and the silent places were terrifying; he tries locked doors, and shudders at empty rooms").[79] The language here brings us back, appropriately, to Troy after its fall, and particularly to the calm that frightened Aeneas upon his reentrance into the city: **horror** *ubique animo simul*

later cases of disregard for the *belli commercia*, notably his treatment of Mezentius and then Turnus.

[77] Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc. notes that this is the first appearance of the collocation *angusta uiarum* after *Aen.* 2.332. Tacitus uses very similar language again at *Hist.* 4.35.2 (*uiarum angusta insiderent*), of Civilis' trap of marching Roman legionaries at Novesium. Baxter (1971) 104 proposes that with *lubrica* and *uiarum* Tacitus is activating the snake imagery of *Aen.* 2.

[78] 65.19.3: "Many of [the attackers] were pelted by roof tiles, and in the narrow passages [ἐν ταῖς στενοχωρίαις] were crowded by the throng of their opponents and cut down."

[79] Suetonius' picture (*Vit.* 16) is decidedly more prosaic: *ubi cum deserta omnia repperisset*. See Oakley (2009b) 206–211 on the stylistic differences between Tacitus' and Suetonius' accounts of Vitellius' death.

ipsa **silentia terrent** (*Aeneid* 2.755: "Horror was everywhere in my heart, and the silence itself was terrifying").[80] It is fitting that, here at the very end of Book 3 and of the civil wars proper, Tacitus evokes this image from the end of *Aeneid* 2 and of Troy's fall. As we have seen in this chapter in our examination of the deaths of Galba and of Rome itself, and shall see in the next chapter in our look at the Battles of Cremona as presented in *Histories* 2 and 3, Virgil's Fall of Troy stubbornly continues to be repeated throughout Tacitus' civil wars. And the allusion to *Aeneid* 2.755 at 3.84.4 operates as a perfect final (but not finalizing) stroke in Tacitus' engagement with Virgil's Troy in these books: silence falls at the end of each war, but it is a silence that terrifies and allows no peace, and thus one that suggests—characteristically for both Tacitus and Virgil—that the sounds and sights and thoughts of the war will linger on, not to be easily shaken or left behind, sure to be repeated. Furthermore, the frighteningly silent setting that Tacitus creates for Vitellius' last moments may be another detail that directs the reader back to Galba, at whose murder, we recall from above, "there was not commotion, nor calm; it was like the silence of great fear and of great anger" (1.40.1: *non tumultus, non quies, quale magni metus et magnae irae silentium est*). With the same type of eerie silence attending Vitellius' death, is Tacitus leading us back to where the year's horrors started, and in another way marking the stubborn, unrelenting character of these civil wars?

Shortly before the evocation of Virgil's haunting post-war wasteland, Tacitus crafts one additional allusion to *Aeneid* 2, which, I suggest, ties together several of the strands of meaning that I have considered in this chapter. It comes in the historian's rich description of the struggle between the Vitellians and Flavians in the praetorian camp (3.84.1–3), an episode that appears in no other sources. At the beginning of this scene Tacitus writes (3.84.1–2):

> plurimum molis in obpugnatione castrorum fuit, quae acerrimus quisque ut nouissimam spem retinebant. eo intentius uictores, praecipuo ueterum cohortium studio, cuncta ualidissimarum urbium excidiis reperta simul admouent, testudinem tormenta aggeres facesque, quidquid tot proeliis laboris

[80] This correspondence is noted by all commentators, as well as Baxter (1971) 106. Keitel (2008) argues that with allusions to *Aen.* 2.755 and 2.728 (*nunc omnes terrent aurae*) Tacitus evokes pity for Vitellius' plight, but also calls attention to the differences between the determined Aeneas' concern for his family and the aimless Vitellius' neglect of his. She also suggests that a reference to Virgil's Underworld here (*Aen.* 6.265: *loca nocte tacentia late*) "may ... be underlining his portrait of Vitellius as a man who has not been truly alive for some time" (708).

> ac periculi hausissent, opere illo consummari clamitantes. [2] urbem senatui ac populo Romano, templa dis reddita: proprium esse militis decus in castris: illam patriam, illos penates. ni statim recipiantur, noctem in armis agendam. contra Vitelliani, quamquam numero fatoque dispares, inquietare uictoriam, morari pacem, domos **arasque cruore foedare**: suprema uictis solacia amplectebantur.

> The greatest struggle was in the attack on the camp, which each of the fiercest men was holding onto as his last hope. All the more intently, therefore, the victors—the zeal of the veteran cohorts being especially strong—simultaneously advanced all the things used in the destruction of the mightiest cities: the *testudo*, catapults, earthworks, and firebrands. And they were repeatedly shouting that whatever toil and danger they had endured, in so many battles, would reach its climax in that effort; [2] that the senate and Roman people had the city, the temples had been returned to the gods, and that their due glory was in the camp—that was their homeland, those were their *penates*; and that, unless the camp was immediately recovered, the night would be spent in battle. The Vitellians, on the other hand, though they were unequal in numbers and doomed, were upsetting the victory, delaying the peace, and defiling the homes and altars with blood—these acts they embraced as the last comforts of the defeated.

Tacitus pulls out all the stops to capture the greatness of this final fight. Packed into his opening line are four superlatives (*plurimum*, *acerrimus*, *nouissimam*, *ualidissimarum*) conveying, respectively, the magnitude of the struggle, the fierceness of the Vitellian defenders, the extent of their desperation, and—most boldly, perhaps—the defensive might of the cities with which Tacitus compares the camp. In order to take the enormous, city-like camp, the Flavian attackers unleash every method of siege warfare, rapidly rattled off by the historian: *testudinem tormenta aggeres facesque*. This battle, shout the Flavian troops, will stand at the top of, or "top off" (*consummari*) their victory. The extraordinariness of the word *consummari*, a hapax in Tacitus, underlines the Flavians' point.

The passage operates in just this way for Tacitus as well. The battle narrative of Books 1–3 is topped off by this scene, a microcosm of his great, big civil war narrative. And the praetorian camp is the perfect venue for this *summa* of Tacitus' civil wars, since it is the home for all of these warring troops.[81] The Vitellians are the ones fiercely defending the camp, while many of the Flavian troops served as Otho's praetorians and are seeking to reclaim their posts. It is this latter group that Tacitus has claim a

[81] As Wellesley (1972) 185 and 220–221 discusses, the praetorians were split in their allegiances in this conflict.

deep, personal, *familial* attachment with the place, as their emotional assertion *illam patriam, illos penates* conveys.[82] Also emblematic of Tacitus' civil war narrative as a whole is the self-destructive persistence on display in this battle. Though it is clear that they cannot prevail (*numero fatoque dispares*), the Vitellians persist in the civil war, *for civil war's sake*: *inquietare uictoriam, morari pacem, domos arasque cruore foedare amplectebantur*.

The third reckless activity that the doomed Vitellians embrace here is the most striking: *domos arasque cruore foedare*. Wellesley is, with reason, perplexed by this detail: "The application of *domos arasque* to the praetorian camp is somewhat far-fetched, but T may be thinking of the *penates* above and of the military chapel in the camp."[83] A less literal-minded approach to this *prima facie* odd phrasing may be more fruitful. Reference to the bloodying of the soldiers' homes (*domos*) continues Tacitus' emphasis on the camp as the home to all of the soldiers in this civil war. Moreover, as Wellesley himself notes,[84] the phrasing *arasque cruore foedare* has a close parallel in *Aeneid* 2.501–502:

> uidi Hecubam centumque nurus Priamumque **per aras**
> **sanguine foedantem** quos ipse sacrauerat ignis.

Here amid the cluster of allusions to the *Aeneid* in *Histories* 3.81–85, Virgil's Priam surfaces again. The defeated Vitellian soldiers are made to replay the Trojan king's final, pitiful act, the fouling of sacred altars with his own blood.[85] And, as we have seen him do time and again, Tacitus builds on the repetition of Virgil's phrase, by making the Vitellians' act decidedly worse. In each of these passages the defeated (Priam, and then the Vitellians) are the subjects of the verb *foedo*. But in the degenerated civil war that Tacitus narrates, the Vitellian soldiers, so unlike Priam, do this *willingly*.[86] They embrace (*amplectebantur*) this act of desecration.

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[82] See my discussion in Chapter 1 of the similarly effective use of *patria* at 3.80.2. The evocative word appears three times here in the concluding chapters of Book 3 (also at 3.72.1), and just ten other times in the rest of the extant *Hist.*

[83] Wellesley (1972) ad loc. Platner and Ashby (1929) 107–108 discuss the shrines to the standards of the guard (mentioned at Herodian 4.4.5 and CIL VI.1609) and to Mars (CIL VI.2256) that were located in the camp.

[84] Along with Baxter (1971) 105 and Foucher (2000) 314.

[85] Also similar to Virgil's phrasing is [Sen.] *Oct.* 148–149 (*cruore foedauit suo* | *patrios penates*), which Ferri (2003) ad loc. maintains "must be reminiscent of" *Aen.* 2.501–502.

[86] See above in this chapter for a similar argument for the addition of willfulness in Tacitus' allusion to *Aen.* 12.534 at 1.40.2 (*proculcato senatu*).

With the phrase *arasque cruore foedare* Tacitus at the same time points us back to the *Histories*' opening act of defilement, the murder of Galba—itself of course a repetition of Priam's death. Recall that at *Histories* 1.26.1, in a preview of Galba's Priam-like murder, Tacitus writes that Galba's murderers were "intent on defiling the republic with the blood of their own emperor" (*rei publicae ... quam* **foedare** *principis sui* **sanguine** *sobrii parabant*). So, here in 3.84.1–3, this summarizing capstone to Books 1–3, Tacitus again recalls and repeats Galba's murder. And by evoking here not just Galba but also Galba's role as another Priam, Tacitus reminds the reader of Galba's special status as a figure of frustratingly deep-seated, timeless, "epic" repetitiveness. He has recalled Galba's death throughout his civil wars, piling up the repetitions of his murder, each time involving and implicating more Roman civil warriors in the act of desecration, each time tightening its hold. The war between Vitellius and Vespasian concludes here at the end of Book 3. But, as I shall suggest in this study's Epilogue, Tacitus sees to it that the compounding repetition and ongoing fall of civil war will live on into Book 4 and, perhaps, beyond.

CHAPTER THREE

THE BATTLES OF CREMONA

The battle geography of the year 69 CE fit perfectly Tacitus' program of repetition in the *Histories*. For the pivotal fighting between the Vitellians and Flavians in October, described at *Histories* 3.15–29, took place in the very same stretch of land in northern Italy as the decisive contest between the Othonians and Vitellians in April, narrated at 2.39–45. I will follow the practice of Kenneth Wellesley in referring to these battles as Cremona I and Cremona II, though in each war the fighting in fact takes place in the area between Cremona and the small village twenty miles to its east, Bedriacum.[1] Tacitus introduces Bedriacum as a place "now notorious and ill-omened because of two disasters for Rome" (2.23.2: *duabus iam Romanis cladibus notus infaustusque*). The sharing of a battlefield by these two conflicts, then, had given Bedriacum a certain infamy in Tacitus' day. This shared battle turf also provided fertile ground on which the historian could highlight—and invent—further similarities between the two wars.

Moreover, Cremona II was in many ways a "rematch" of Cremona I. Otho's coalition of armed support, which consisted chiefly of the two Pannonian and two Dalmatian legions and five praetorian cohorts (2.11.1–2), would pledge allegiance to Vespasian soon after their defeat at Cremona I (see 2.67.1 of the praetorians' switch, and 2.86.1–3 of the Balkan legions'). And while many of these forces had not arrived in time to fight at Cremona I, the Pannonian legion XIII Gemina and the praetorian cohorts were present, and opposing the very same Vitellian troops, at both battles.[2]

In two speeches that Tacitus alone in the tradition includes, he has characters explicitly call attention to the repetitive dynamics of the rematch

[1] The precise location of Bedriacum is uncertain. Wellesley (1972) 200 places it at 20 Roman miles east of Cremona. At 198–204 Wellesley teases from the text locations for each of the sites and skirmishes of Cremona II (after declaring at 198 that "T is not interested in the topography for its own sake, here or elsewhere"). For charting the fighting in northern Italy in Books 2 and 3, the maps at Wellesley (1964) 326–329 are helpful.

[2] Chilver (1979) 269–273 presents the case that the main body of the other Pannonian legion, VII Galbiana (later Gemina), was there to fight at Cremona I, as it did at Cremona II. Arguing against this suggestion are Wellesley (1971) 41–51 and Murison (1993) 110–113, who lucidly sorts through the evidence for troop presence at Cremona I.

at Cremona II. In the lead-up to this battle, the consul and commander of the German legions Caecina Alienus announces his plans to switch allegiance from Vitellius to Vespasian (3.13.1). Mutiny ensues, and Tacitus fashions the thoughts of the angry and ready-to-fight soldiers. Among their protests they say: *quas enim ex diuerso legiones? nempe uictas!* (3.13.2: "What legions are opposing us? Surely the ones we defeated!"). On the opposing side the Flavian commander Antonius Primus also speaks of the repetitiveness of the upcoming battle, but with a different spin. He does this during a pep talk to the Flavian armies, at 3.24.1:

> cur resumpsissent arma, Pannonicas legiones interrogabat: illos esse campos in quibus abolere labem prioris ignominiae, ubi reciperare gloriam possent.
>
> [Primus] was asking the Pannonian legions why they had resumed the war, and saying that these were the fields in which they could obliterate the blemish of their prior disgrace, and recover glory.

So, to the Pannonian legionaries who fought at Cremona I, Antonius casts this battle as a resumption (*resumpsissent*) of the last one; and he appeals to the sameness of the location (*illos campos*) as a source of shame and possible redemption. Later in this chapter the general addresses other troops for whom Cremona II is a rematch (3.24.3):

> mox infensus praetorianis 'vos' inquit, 'nisi uincitis, pagani, quis alius imperator, quae castra alia excipient? illic signa armaque uestra sunt, et mors uictis; nam ignominiam consumpsistis.'
>
> Soon he turned with anger to the praetorians and said, "If you do not prevail, you who are now civilians, what other emperor will accept you, and what other camp will take you in? Over there are your standards and your weapons, and there is death for the defeated—since you have already used up your disgrace."

In this challenge to the praetorians, who were pardoned by Vitellius after Cremona I (2.67.1) but would get no quarter again, Antonius' sharpest dagger is the reference to their lost standards and weapons. These, he asserts, are right over there—the fronted *illic* is emphatic—with the Vitellians whom they will now meet in battle for a second time.

Tacitus' fashioning of the Vitellians' and Antonius' speeches to underscore the fundamental and frustrating sameness of Cremonas I and II is typical of his treatment of these two battles. On further ways in which he casts these battles as repetitive doubles of one another I will focus in the first part of this chapter. Then I will address how he builds upon the battle-scenes of Lucan and especially Virgil, in an effort to compound and deepen the sense of sameness at Cremona. I will conclude the chapter with a close

look at the medial passage 2.70, a forward- and backward-looking chapter that offers a haunting tableau of the regressive repetitiveness gripping the year 69 and Tacitus' narrative.

The Two Cremonas: Repetitions

In Chapter 1 I discussed how Tacitus employs the "proem in the middle" at *Histories* 2.37–38 to underscore the sameness of Roman civil war. I went on to argue that in that passage he is also holding up sameness / repetition as the underlying literary trope of this work.

Appropriately, the battle narrative immediately following that digression, Cremona I (2.39–45), finds a wealth of repetitions in his account of the latter stages of Cremona II (3.25–34). Tacitus' treatment of Cremona I is in many of its details very close to Plutarch's at *Otho* 12–14, and his Cremona II has much in common with Dio's version at 65.11.4–15.2.[3] But much of the material that we see repeated at the two battles is entirely absent from these other sources in the parallel tradition, and so the Tacitean details emerge quite distinctly as part of the historian's *inuentio* and literary plan.[4]

These intratextual repetitions come chiefly in Tacitus' handling of the psychology and behavior of civil war. I shall focus on five such parallels at the two Battles of Cremona. Firstly, Tacitus anticipates the outcome of each battle by focusing (like no other source does, at either battle) on the conflicted emotions that characterize the losers-to-be in the midst of combat. And at each battle he employs the very same elaborate literary device to depict this tension among the ranks. At Cremona I he writes of the Othonians (2.41.3):

> ut cuique *audacia* uel **formido**, in *primam* **postremam**ue aciem *prorumpebant* aut **relabebantur**.
>
> Depending on the boldness or the fright of each, they either broke through to the front of the lines, or withdrew to the back.

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[3] Especially notable are *Hist.* 2.42–43, which matches up very closely with Plutarch, *Otho* 12, and *Hist.* 3.23.1–25.1, which shares many precise details with Dio 65.14.2–3. Dio gives only short notice of Cremona I, at 64.10.3. Suetonius allots Cremona I one sentence at *Otho* 9.2, and includes brief mention of Cremona II at *Vesp.* 7.1.

[4] Manolaraki (2005) 246–249 also discusses intratextual connections between the battles, with a focus on how the winning side at each battle takes advantage of the landscape at Bedriacum.

Characterizing the battle-response of one group of troops is one set of modifiers (italicized here: *audacia*, *primam*, *prorumpebant*), each of which is balanced by opposites that define the other group (put in bold: *formido*, *postremam*, *relabebantur*).[5] The juxtaposition of each set of opposites serves to mix together the bold and the timid, and thus to convey visually within the text the sense of psychological disarray on the Othonian side. When fighting breaks out between the Vitellians and Flavians at Cremona II, Tacitus presents the Vitellian line similarly (3.25.1):

> gradum inferunt quasi recentibus auxiliis aucti, rariore iam Vitellianorum acie, ut quos nullo rectore suus quemque *impetus* uel **pauor** *contraheret* **diduceret**ue.
>
> [The Flavians] advanced as if they had been strengthened by fresh reinforcements, while the line of the Vitellians was now thinner, since, with no leader present, individual impulse or panic drew together or spread out the line.

Again, courage and cowardliness are in tension in the ranks. This time the recently victorious Vitellians take on the part of the loser that the Othonians played at Cremona I. And again Tacitus creates a textual tug-of-war (with *impetus … contraheret* at odds with *pauor … diduceret*) in order to capture this tension, and so anticipate this side's failure in the battle. Furthermore, for the losers at Cremonas I and II a crisis of leadership stokes the confusion in the ranks: so 2.41.3 (*apud Othonianos pauidi duces*, "on the Othonian side the generals were fearful") and 2.43.2 (*ducibus Othonis iam pridem profugis*, "at this point Otho's generals had already fled"), alongside 3.18.1 (*haud perinde rebus prosperis ducem desiderauerant atque in aduersis deesse intellegebant*, "[These troops] had never in success longed for their general as much as they now felt his absence in adversity") and 3.25.1 (*nullo rectore*, above). As we saw in Chapter 2, Tacitus also highlights the lack of leadership in the build-up to the deaths of Galba (*sibi quisque dux et instigator*, 1.38.3) and the Capitol (*nullo duce, sibi quisque auctor*, 3.71.1). Held up prominently in these key episodes, the absence of any kind of leadership is surely an abiding condition of these civil wars—and one that, as we shall see in the Epilogue, Tacitus makes live on into the post-war narrative of Book 4.[6]

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[5] Brink (1944) treats Tacitus' use of this construction, and cites further examples at *Hist.* 1.6.1, 1.62.2, 1.79.3, 2.92.2, *Ann.* 1.55.1, 2.46.3, and 3.63.3. All of the other examples he cites are from poetry: Propertius 2.22.33, *Paneg. Messallae* 40 and 48, and Virgil, *Aen.* 3.679–681 and 12.749–753.

[6] The key passage there is 4.11.1.

Another detail that Tacitus brings to both Cremonas I and II is a moment of recognition across lines in the heat of battle. This is a *topos* of civil-war narratives,[7] and Tacitus is sure to incorporate it, in two different ways, into each battle. At 2.42.2 opposing Othonians and Vitellians see familiar faces when battling it out: *noscentes inter se, ceteris conspicui, in euentum totius belli certabant* ("Recognizing one another, visible to the others, they were fighting for the outcome of the whole war").[8] At Cremona II the recognition comes during a vignette about the murder of the Vitellian legionary Julius Mansuetus by his son, a Flavian soldier. Tacitus cites Vipstanus Messalla as a source for this story (3.25.2), but it appears nowhere else, and its stock nature has led Woodman to suggest that Tacitus made it up entirely.[9] Whatever the case, Tacitus' fashioning of this incident reaches its emotional peak when he zooms in on the warriors' recognition of one another, after the fatal blow: *agnitus agnoscensque et exsanguem amplexus, uoce flebili precabatur placatos patris manes, neue se ut parricidam auersarentur* ("Recognized and recognizing his father, he embraced the bloodless man, and prayed in a mournful voice that the shades of his father would be appeased, and that they would not turn away from him, as from a parricide"). As at 2.42.2 (*noscentes inter se*), this is a double recognition, made more poignant and immediate here by the fronted polyptoton *agnitus agnoscensque*. And this recognition is a brutal escalation of the earlier one, in that it is between the closest of relations, father and son. Tacitus' use of the adjective *exsanguis* to describe the slain father is thus especially effective and appropriate for conveying the ugly intimacy and "mirroring" of civil war, as the parricide embraces, for the last time, his own now bloodless blood.

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[7] Ash (2007a) ad loc. notes other instances of this motif at Lucan, *BC* 4.169–179 and 7.460–469, Plutarch, *Pomp.* 70.1, and Dio 41.58. Dio develops this theme with great richness at 65.12.1–14.1, of Cremona II, where (as we shall see presently) Tacitus' battle-line recognition scene is very different.

[8] In accounting for the historicity of this scene, Wellesley (1964) 106 n. 1 notes that the "First (Italian) Legion and the praetorians had both served in Italy." Chilver (1979) 207 (similar to Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc., *pace* Ash (2007a) ad loc.) understands the phrase to mean that "both sides knew to which side the other troops belonged."

[9] Woodman (1998) 13–16, following Courbaud's (1918) 153–154 suspicions of Tacitus' method here, suggests that Tacitus worked from the stock motifs of the parricide and the fratricide in civil war to invent this episode, as well as the fratricide recounted at 3.51.1. If this skepticism is on target, then is Tacitus' citation of sources for these two stories (see 3.25.2, printed above, and 3.51.1: *celeberrimos auctores habeo*), a rare practice for him, a type of "over-compensation" for his narrative invention? For the motif of family members fighting and killing one another in civil war, see e.g. [Sen.] *Epig.* 69 and 70, Lucan *BC* 3.326–327 and 7.626–630, Silius 9.66–177, and more examples at Jal (1963) 396–401.

Tacitus concludes his tale of the patricide at Cremona II by portraying the reaction of other combatants to the horrific deed. At 3.25.3 he writes:

> aduertere proximi, deinde plures: hinc per omnem aciem miraculum et questus et saeuissimi belli execratio. nec eo segnius propinquos adfinis fratres trucidant spoliant: factum esse scelus loquuntur faciuntque.
>
> Those very nearby turn to [the parricide], and then many others do. Then throughout the battle-line there is wonder and regret and the cursing of this most savage war. But they do not slaughter and despoil their relatives, kinsmen, brothers any more slowly because of this: they declare that a crime has been committed, and then commit it themselves.

Tacitus includes this gathering of outraged soldiers only in order to expose their hypocrisy. Though they condemn this act, they are all parricides as well: the multiple asyndeta in *propinquos adfinis fratres trucidant spoliant* get across just how quick they too are to kill their own. And the polyptoton in Tacitus' clinching *sententia* (*factum ... faciuntque*) underscores the similarities between the accusers and the accused.

A similar and similarly biting *sententia* about hypocrisy in civil war appears at Cremona I. There too Tacitus builds up to it via an exemplary vignette. As the Othonians scatter after their defeat, the legate Vedius Aquila is attacked by his men, who suspect treachery on his part (2.44.1):

> multo adhuc die uallum ingressus clamore seditiosorum et fugacium circumstrepitur; non probris, non manibus abstinent; desertorem proditoremque increpant, nullo proprio crimine eius sed more uulgi suum quisque flagitium aliis obiectantes.
>
> Late in the day [Vedius] entered the fort and was surrounded by the shouting of mutineers and fugitives; they did not hold back from insults, nor from attacking him; they rebuked him for being a deserter and traitor—with no valid charge against him, but, in the manner of the mob, each was hurling at others his own crimes.

Like the story of Julius Mansuetus and his son that Tacitus tells at Cremona II, this tale is absent from all other sources. It too wraps up with a pithy generalization about hypocrisy (*more uulgi suum quisque flagitium aliis obiectantes*), as these seditious fugitives (*seditiosorum et fugacium*) accuse Aquila of being a seditious fugitive (*desertorem proditoremque*).

Further continuities in the civil-war conduct at Cremonas I and II come in the respective victors' manner of post-battle plunder. So, after each battle there occurs the slaughter, rather than the sale, of captives. Tacitus highlights this practice at 2.44.1 (*immensum id spatium, obstructae strage corporum uiae, quo plus caedis fuit; neque enim ciuilibus bellis capti in praedam uertuntur*, "The distance of travel [for the Othonians] was immeasurable, and

the roads were piled high with heaps of bodies, which led to more slaughter, since in civil war captives cannot be turned to profit");[10] and then at 3.34.2 (*Antonius pudore flagitii, crebrescente inuidia, edixit ne quis Cremonensem captiuum detineret. inritamque praedam militibus effecerat consensus Italiae, emptionem talium mancipiorum aspernantis: occidi coepere*, "Antonius, out of shame for his disgrace and since hatred for his deeds was growing, announced that no one should detain a citizen from Cremona as a captive. That spoil was valueless to soldiers had been brought about by an agreement in Italy to refuse the purchase of such captives as slaves. So they began to be killed").[11] The latter passage develops more fully the bitter irony revealed at both Cremonas, that, in civil war, the sparing of the defeated from captivity actually ends up *causing* their deaths.

After each battle Tacitus also uses the same language to articulate the omnivorous manner of the victors' looting. In the aftermath of Cremona I, he describes the Vitellian troops' triumphant march through northern Italy (2.56.1):

> ceterum Italia grauius atque atrocius quam bello adflictabatur. dispersi per municipia et colonias Vitelliani spoliare, **rapere**, **ui et stupris** polluere: **in omne fas nefasque** auidi aut uenales **non sacro, non profano** abstinebant.
>
> But Italy was being afflicted more severely and with more gloom than it had been in the war. Spread through the towns and colonies, the Vitellians were robbing, stealing, and disgracing with violence and rape. Greedy or mercenary for everything lawful and unlawful, they held back from nothing sacred and nothing profane.

This outrageous post-battle behavior is just the sort of stuff that the historian promised in his table of contents (*Italia … adflictabatur* here recalls 1.2.2: *iam uero Italia nouis cladibus … adflicta*), and it happens again, with new actors playing the parts of the plunderers, soon after in his narrative. This is in 3.33, Tacitus' treatment of the Flavian troops' pillaging after Cremona II. The language of plunder and violation that he condensed into one sentence at 2.56.1 is unpacked and expanded at 3.33 into a lengthy chapter, which I print in full below during my treatment of the wealth of Virgilian allusions

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[10] Plutarch is clearly working from the same source when he writes at *Otho* 14.2, of Cremona I: "It is natural that more die in civil wars, whenever there is a rout, because no one takes captives, since there is no use for them." Dio does not bring up this matter in his treatment of Cremona II.

[11] Tacitus goes on to explain that this slaughter led to the ransom of many of the Cremonese: *quod ubi enotuit, a propinquis adfinibusque occulte redemptabantur* (3.34.2).

therein. As I shall discuss there, the enormity of the victors' appetite for rapine is a conventional detail in depictions of an *urbs capta*. But it is certainly significant that, when conveying how all-encompassing the pillagers' voraciousness was at Cremona II, Tacitus reuses two potent phrases, nearly verbatim, that he had used at Cremona I: note **aliud cuique fas** *nec quidnam inlicitum* (3.33.2—"each had his own law—nor was anything forbidden"); and *cum omnia* **sacra profanaque** *in igne considerent* (3.33.2—"when everything sacred and profane was settling down in flames").[12] The Flavian victors, it is clear, are just as lawless and flagrantly indiscriminate as their Vitellian doubles in the previous book.

In some ways, however, the plunder at Cremona II is doubly bad. After Cremona I the Vitellians disgrace their victims "with violence and rape" (*ui et stupris*). With his diction Tacitus indicates that after Cremona II there was twice the rape (**stupra** *caedibus, caedes* **stupris** *miscerentur*, "rape was being mixed with slaughter, and slaughter with rape," 3.33.1) and twice the violence (**ui** *manibusque* **rapientium** *diuolsus* ... *maiore aliorum* **ui** *truncabantur*, "[victims] were torn apart by the violent hands of those preying upon them ... [plundering troops] were being cut down by the greater violence of others," 3.33.1). And Tacitus compounds the sense of escalating repetition by making *repetition itself* a source of motivation for the plunderers at Cremona II. When giving the reasons for the Flavians' behavior there, he writes that "the fact that this was the same seat of war again increased their ill-will" (*auxit inuidiam* ... *eademque rursus belli sedes*, 3.32.2). As we saw at the start of this chapter, Antonius Primus had incited his men to fight by pointed appeal to Cremona II's repetitive dynamics (3.24). This same quality drives them to plunder all the more after the battle. Sameness, we see, is not just an abiding, relentless characteristic of these wars and this narrative, but it is also itself an agent of sorts, a motivator of the wars' characters, a begetter of more of the same.

[12] Tacitus pairs forms of *sacer* and *profanus* one other time, at *Ann.* 1.51.1, also of plunder, namely Germanicus' devastation of German villages (*profana simul et sacra* ... *solo aequantur*). Ash (2007a) on 2.56.1 contrasts Tacitus' pairing of these terms with the practice of Livy (29.8.8–9) and Curtius (10.1.3), who depict an escalation in destruction of the profane to that of the sacred, whereas Tacitus' usage "suggests simultaneous annihilation of the non-sacred and sacred."

Ever Fleeting Commiseration

I will spend a little more time on an additional theme that Tacitus works into both of his Cremonas: the commiseration between the two sides after battle. The first and, significantly, much fuller scene of commiseration comes after Cremona I. At 2.45.3 he describes the gathering of Othonians and Vitellians in the former's camp, after a truce is settled:

> tum uicti uictoresque in lacrimas effusi, sortem ciuilium armorum misera laetitia detestantes; isdem tentoriis alii fratrum, alii propinquorum uolnera fouebant. spes et praemia in ambiguo, certa funera et luctus, nec quisquam adeo mali expers ut non aliquam mortem maereret.
>
> Then the vanquished and the victors burst into tears, and with a miserable joy cursed the lot of civil war. In the same tents some treated the wounds of brothers, others the wounds of relatives: their hopes and rewards were unclear, certain were the deaths and grieving; and no one was so uninvolved in this calamity that he did not mourn someone's death.

Tacitus has done much more with his source material than the one other author who treats this scene, Plutarch. In his *Otho* Plutarch writes only that "none of the soldiers did any harm to each other; rather, there were greetings and salutations, and all took an oath to Vitellius and went over to his side" (*Otho* 14.7). In his immensely richer version Tacitus makes the soldiers' grief, and particularly the *community* of the grief, deepen and grow in the long parataxis that runs from *tum* to *maereret*. The losers and winners are made to stand beside each other (*uicti uictoresque*) and are thus in a way assimilated at the outset, so we know that all are involved equally in the exercises of lament that follow. Of the sharing and all-inclusiveness of this grief we are reminded by the image *isdem tentoriis* and then the clinching *sententia* that runs from *nec* to *maereret*. The range of emotions experienced by the grieving soldiers is tautly captured by the series *misera laetitia detestantes*—in which feelings move rapidly from misery to joy and then to outrage. And in the chiastic, A-B-C/C-B-A phrase *spes* et **praemia** IN AMBIGUO, CERTA **funera** et *luctus*, the troops' uncertainties are made even gloomier by the certainties that counterbalance them: hope is outweighed by grief, and the possibility of spoils by the sureness of the death that is all around them.

Commentators on this passage compare it to the final scene of Sallust's *Bellum Catilinae*. After narrating the defeat of Catiline's army by that of Petreius, Sallust concludes the work with the victorious Roman army walking the battlefield, which is strewn with the bodies of friends and enemies (61.8). The work's final line is: *ita uarie per omnem exercitum laetitia, maeror,*

luctus atque gaudia agitabantur (61.9: "And so throughout the whole army, in various ways, joy and sorrow, grief and gladness were being stirred up"). Given the prominent place of this line, it is likely that Sallust's concise articulation of the conflicting emotions of war[13] influenced Tacitus' approach at *Histories* 2.45.3. But the Tacitean passage differs in that, as we have seen, it concentrates on the community of mourning, by winners and losers together, at Cremona I.

The sentiment and the diction of 2.45.3 also seem to recall and respond to a passage from the battle narrative of *Aeneid* 10. At 10.755–761 the poet steps briefly away from narration of individual battle encounters to write broadly of the day's combat, and of the divine reaction to it:[14]

> iam grauis aequabat **luctus** et **mutua** Mauors
> **funera**; caedebant pariter pariterque ruebant
> **uictores uictique**, neque his fuga nota neque illis.
> di Iouis in tectis iram miserantur inanem
> amborum et tantos mortalibus esse labores;
> hinc Venus, hinc contra spectat Saturnia Iuno.
> pallida Tisiphone media inter milia saeuit.

> Now harsh Mars was making equal the grief and the shared death; slaughtering in equal measure and falling in equal measure were the victors and the vanquished, and neither these nor those knew flight. The gods in Jove's house lament the futile anger on both sides, and the fact that mortals endure such great toils; from one side Venus, and from the opposing side Saturnian Juno spectate. Amid the thousands pale Tisiphone rages.

Virgil's focus here is on the shared experiences of enemies in war, both on the human plane (compressed into two lines at 10.756–757 are the assimilating pairs *pariter pariterque*, *uictores uictique*, and *neque his* ... *neque illis*), and among the divine advocates (similar is *hinc* ... *hinc*, 760). As we have seen, Tacitus also uses the pair *uicti uictoresque* to conflate the winners and losers at *Histories* 2.45.3. And in each of these passages we also find the collocation of the complementary nouns *funera* and *luctus* (*iam grauis aequabat luctus et mutua Mauors* | *funera*, *Aen.* 10.755–756; *certa funera et luctus*, *Hist.* 2.45.3). These are by no means extraordinary words, but neither author cou-

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[13] Ramsey (1984) 234 discusses Sallust's chiastic phrase *laetitia, maeror, luctus atque gaudia*.

[14] As Harrison (1991) ad loc. discusses, the model for Virgil's passage is *Il.* 11.70–83, a description of the Greeks and Trojans battling it out equally and the gods showing little regard for the human affairs below—a detail meaningfully altered by Virgil ("an indication of the broader *humanitas* of the *Aeneid*," writes Harrison).

ples them elsewhere in his writing.[15] And, most importantly, the contexts are identical: both Virgil, who powerfully makes these nouns the objects of *aequabat ... Mauors*, and Tacitus are emphasizing that death and the grief that accompanies it are the lots of *all sides* in war.

If Tacitus is calling to mind this passage from Virgil's Latin War, then a contrast with the poet is also conspicuous. As in the Sallustian passage, there is no depiction of human commiseration in Virgil's scene. This large-mindedness—however rare and, as I shall address shortly, brief—is something that only Tacitus of the three authors grants to his war's participants. Virgil does, however, have the *gods* pity (*miserantur*) mortals for their vain anger (*iram ... inanem*) and great toils (10.758–759). As I discussed in Chapter 1, the gods of the *Aeneid* show both ill will and support, spite and compassion. But an image of divine compassion such as the one Virgil includes at 10.758–759 would not work for Tacitus at Cremona; he is sure to leave it out in his response to Virgil's passage. The historian's most recent reference to the gods was, in fact, his blaming of them for *their own* anger at 2.38.2. The contrast is sharp and may stand as another demonstration of how Tacitus, like Lucan, draws only the anger and none of the benevolence from Virgil's divine apparatus.

In spite of this meaningful difference from Virgil's passage, there is another point of contact with *Histories* 2.45. For all of the reflectiveness on shared suffering offered in *Aeneid* 10.758–760, the misery and toil will not cease. The pause for perspective and lament in these lines is momentary, and abruptly cut off at line 761, when the rage of the Fury Tisiphone leads us back to the battle narrative, and to the *aristeia* of Mezentius (10.762: *at uero ingentem quatiens Mezentius hastam*, "But now Mezentius, shaking his great spear ..."). The evanescence of such moments of pause and lament is also brought out by Tacitus at Cremona I. Just after the powerful tableau of human commiseration in 2.45.3, Tacitus describes the sentiments of Otho's praetorian supporters and the scouts from the advancing Moesian legions, all of whom want to rally the emperor to resume the struggle with Vitellius (2.46). Otho, as we read in 2.46–49 and shall discuss at length in Chapter 4, will try to put an end to this war by committing suicide. But the longing to renew the war abides. Tacitus makes this clear in the sententious assessment with which he concludes 2.46: *nemo dubitet potuisse renouari bellum atrox lugubre incertum uictis et uictoribus* (2.46.3: "No one would doubt that

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[15] Tacitus uses *funus* for "funeral" in proximity to *luctus* soon after our passage, at *Hist.* 2.51.1, of Otho's funeral: *in funere eius nouata luctu ac dolore militum seditio.*

the war could have been renewed—gloomy, lamentable, and uncertain for the vanquished and the victors alike"). The diction in this line points unmistakably back to 2.45.3, just above in Tacitus' narrative: the sorrow (*lugubre*, cognate of *luctus*)[16] and uncertainty (*incertum*) of war are precisely the qualities that he emphasized there: *spes et praemia in ambiguo, certa funera et luctus*. And here at 2.46.3, as at 2.45.3, Tacitus employs the assimilative pair *uicti et uictores* to capture concisely the communality of suffering in civil war.[17] So the prospect of the horrors of Cremona I being repeated is pointedly raised here, immediately after the war's completion.[18]

And the Battle of Cremona will in fact be renewed and refought. The settlement and commiseration of 2.45 are fleeting, Otho's noble suicide an outlying gesture. Tacitus' description of a nocturnal fight during the intermediate stages of Cremona II (3.22.3: *proelium tota nocte uarium anceps atrox his rursus illis exitiabile*—"Throughout the night was a battle diverse, uncertain, gloomy, destructive for one side and then for the other") seems to provide dictional evidence of this fact. The closeness of expression to the words at 2.46.3 (recall *bellum atrox lugubre incertum uictis et uictoribus*) assures the reader that the possibility raised after Cremona I of repetition—of more of the same uncertainty, gloom, and shared suffering—is being made real at Cremona II.

Moreover, as I discussed at the opening of this chapter, many of the very same opposing troops will meet again at Cremona II. Tacitus even makes the troops at Cremona II reflect on their roles at Cremona I. At 3.31.3, in the description of the Vitellians' surrender to the victorious Flavians, he writes:

> mox, ut praeberi ora contumeliis et posita omni ferocia cuncta uicti patiebantur, subit recordatio illos esse qui nuper Bedriaci uictoriae temperassent.
>
> Soon, when the vanquished allowed their faces to be exposed to insults and, putting all fierceness aside, were enduring everything, the victors were struck

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[16] They are both from *lugeo*, "to mourn."

[17] It is notable that Tacitus juxtaposes *uicti* and *uictores* a total of eight times in the civil-war-torn *Hist.* (the others are at 2.7.1, 2.77.2, 3.32.1, 3.70.3, 4.11.1, and 4.74.4), but just once in the *Ann.* (at 12.29.2).

[18] Ash (2007a) ad loc. suggests that Tacitus' *bellum atrox lugubre incertum uictis et uictoribus* recalls Sallust's description of the war with Jugurtha as *atrox uariaque uictoria* at *BJ* 5.1, and notes a difference that would strengthen my argument here: "where Sallust strives to emphasise the war's *uniqueness*, T. pessimistically opens up the possibility of tedious and destructive *repetition* of the campaign between Otho and Vitellius." Also imbuing this phrase with a reflection on civil war's repetitiveness may be an allusion to Horace, *C.* 2.1.33–34, where the civil war narrated by Horace's addressee Asinius Pollio is called a *lugubris … belli.* Woodman (2003) 203 n. 49 notes that the one other pairing of *lugubris* and *bellum* is at Livy 30.40.2, and suggests that the phrase is Pollio's invention.

> by the recollection that these were the men who had recently been temperate in victory at Bedriacum.

The Vitellians' exposure of their faces here leads the Flavians, who had been fighting for Otho at Cremona I, to recognize their foes. The memory of these soldiers' mercy and their shared grieving at Cremona I overtakes them (*recordatio* as the subject of *subit* is forceful),[19] and, for a moment, a return to that scene's poignancy seems imminent. But that possibility is immediately discarded. Tacitus launches his next sentence with a pointed *sed* and moves right to the Flavians' verbal abuse of the traitorous consul Caecina (3.31.4).[20]

So, whereas at Cremona I commiseration about the suffering of war is given a rich textual exploration (2.45.3) before the impermanence of this peace is exposed (2.46.3), here at Cremona II just the thought (*recordatio*) of such reflectiveness and compassion strikes the men. In this loss of the capacity to at least grieve together, Cremona II represents a precipitous degeneration from Cremona I: Roman conduct in civil war is worsening as this year progresses. The repetitions that underlie Cremona I and II are, like the repetitions of Galba's death across the *Histories* that peak in the burning of the Capitol, unmistakably and relentlessly regressive.

Conflicting emotions in the ranks (2.41.3 and 3.25.1), recognition across battle lines (2.42.2 and 3.25.2), flagrant hypocrisy (2.44.1 and 3.25.3), outrageous post-war plunder (2.44.1 and 2.56.1, then 3.33–34), shared suffering (2.45.3 and 3.31.3)—with the same arresting inclusions Tacitus characterizes the civil warriors at Cremonas I and II. And if there is any change in the iteration of Cremona I at Cremona II, it is that things have gotten worse: the identification of opponents during combat (2.42.2) becomes the heart-wrenching recognition of a slain father by his son (3.25.2); the pillagers' post-war violence and rape only multiplies (2.56.1 → 3.33.1); and the rich portrait of commiseration at 2.45.3 becomes at 3.31.3 just a fleeting thought of compassion.

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19 Tacitus uses abstract nouns with *subeo* for similar emotional effect (as "to come over [someone]") at *Agr.* 3.1 (*subit ... ipsius inertiae dulcedo*), *Hist.* 1.13.2 (*rei publicae curam subisse*), 1.37.3 (*horror animum subit*), 2.70.3 (*lacrimaeque et misericordia subiret*), *Ann.* 2.2.2 (*subiit pudor*), and 11.28.2 (*subibat ... metus*). See further Fletcher (1964) 57 on *subeo*, and Woodman (2009c) for the possibility that Tacitus draws the phrase *subit recordatio* from Pliny, *Ep.* 1.9.3. They are the only two authors to use the phrase (Pliny writes it again at *Ep.* 4.24.1).

20 While Tacitus gives us just this brief moment of confraternity, Dio (our only other source with any detail on Cremona II) seizes on this theme, committing the better part of 65.12–13 to the opposing soldiers' recognition of one another across battle lines, appeals for peace, and even the sharing of food and drink.

The Sieges at Placentia and Cremona

Further meaningful intratextual repetitiveness is conspicuous in the description of the combat itself at Cremona II. The Flavians' attempted siege of the Vitellian camp, which Tacitus describes at 3.27.1–3, has striking similarities with his account of the failed Vitellian siege of the Othonian stronghold Placentia at 2.22.1–2, a battle fought in the lead-up to Cremona I. The tactics used at each siege (the attackers' *testudo* and assault on the walls; the defense's hurling of stones from atop the walls) are common in depictions of sieges in Tacitus' and other authors' writing, and indeed reflective of standard Roman military practice.[21] But the diction that Tacitus employs at these battles links connects them in an extraordinary and significant way. As we shall see in the next section, dictional links with Virgilian and Lucanian siege-narratives are also conspicuous. For now, I print the relevant excerpts from *Histories* 2.22 and 3.27, with the shared details underlined:

> uixdum orto die plena propugnatoribus moenia, fulgentes armis uirisque campi: densum legionum agmen, sparsa auxiliorum manus altiora murorum **sagittis aut saxis** incessere, neglecta aut aeuo fluxa comminus adgredi. **ingerunt desuper Othoniani pila librato magis et certo ictu** aduersus temere subeuntis cohortis Germanorum, cantu truci et more patrio nudis corporibus **super umeros scuta quatientium**. [2] **legionarius** pluteis et cratibus tectus **subruit muros**, instruit aggerem, **molitur portas**: contra praetoriani dispositos ad id ipsum **molares ingenti pondere ac fragore prouoluunt**. pars subeuntium obruti, pars confixi et **exsangues aut laceri**: cum augeret **stragem** trepidatio eoque acrius e moenibus volnerarentur, redi⟨e⟩re infracta partium fama.
> (*Hist.* 2.22.1–2)

> Scarcely had the day begun, when the walls were filled with defenders, and the fields were gleaming with arms and men. The tightly-packed formation of the legions and the spread-out troop of auxiliaries attacked the higher parts of the walls with arrows or stones, and came in close on the parts that had been neglected or were weak from age. From above the Othonians hurl javelins with a more balanced and certain thrust against the heedlessly advancing cohorts of Germans, who, with their savage songs and naked bodies (as is their nation's custom), were shaking their shields over their shoulders. The legionary troops, protected by sheds and hurdles, undermined the walls, built up earthworks, and went to work on the gates. In response the praetorians were rolling down, with a crash, stones of enormous weight that had been

[21] On the *topos* of the siege in Latin literature and in particular in Virgil (to whom we turn in the next section), see Rossi (2004) 178–187. And see Davies (2006) for a detailed historical study of Roman siege tactics. At 9–24 he discusses (and acknowledges the problems inherent in) our literary sources.

> placed along the wall for that very purpose. Some of the attackers were crushed, others were struck and left bloodless or mangled. Since fear was adding to the slaughter, and as a result they were being wounded more grievously from the walls, the Vitellians retreated, with the party's prestige broken.
>
> primo **sagittis saxisque** eminus certabant, maiore Flauianorum pernicie, in quos tela **desuper librabantur**; mox **uallum portasque legionibus** adtribuit ... [2] tum **elatis super capita scutis** densa testudine succedunt. [3] Romanae utrimque artes: **pondera saxorum** Vitelliani **prouoluunt**, disiectam fluitantemque testudinem lanceis contisque scrutantur, donec soluta compage scutorum **exsangues aut laceros** prosternerent multa cum **strage**.
>
> (*Hist.* 3.27.1–3)
>
> At first they fought from afar with arrows and stones, with greater destruction of the Flavians, against whom [the Vitellians] were hurling weapons from above. Soon [Antonius] assigned the legions the rampart and the gates .... Then [the Flavians] raised their shields above their heads and approached in a tightly-packed *testudo*. On each side were Roman ways of war: the Vitellians rolled forward the weight of rocks, and with spears and poles probed the *testudo*, now separating and wavering. At last, when they had broken that structure of shields, they laid low the dying or the wounded with much slaughter.

Neither Plutarch's account of the siege of Placentia (*Otho* 6.1–2)[22] nor Dio's of Cremona II (65.11–15), our only other sources for these battles, includes the details that we find in the two Tacitean passages. And these shared details are in great measure unique in Tacitus' writing, and in some cases uncommon in the Latin corpus as a whole. At each the fighting begins with the exchange of arrows and rocks (*sagittis aut saxis*, 2.22.1; *sagittis saxisque*, 3.27.1), not peculiar words, but words that the historian pairs nowhere else and that are rarely juxtaposed by other authors.[23] In the depictions of the defense from above, we find the same words at each battle, *desuper* and *libro*, a verb he uses just twice elsewhere, and only one other time for the hurling of weapons.[24] The attacking Germans at Placentia hold up their

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22 Plutarch focuses almost exclusively on the insults hurled by the Vitellians at the Othonians, and how these served as motivation for the Othonians in their defense of Placentia.

23 The only other authors I have found are Jerome in the fourth century (*Chron.* 2.26; see too *Chron.* 1.12: *pugnatores ... saxa iacientes et dirigentes sagittas*) and the fifth-century epitomist Vegetius (2.25). See also the comparable wording by Seneca, *De Consol. ad Marciam* 9.3 (*expecta uulnus et illa superne uolantia cum sagittis pilisque saxa*) and Lucan, *BC* 7.511–512 (*inde sagittae | inde faces et saxa uolant*).

24 At *Ann.* 1.64.2. Tacitus uses it *proprie*, meaning "to balance," at *Hist.* 1.16.1. *Iacio* is his usual verb for throwing weapons, at e.g. *Hist.* 1.55.2, 2.29.1, 3.71.2, 4.29.3; and *Ann.* 1.27.2, 4.49.2.

shields (*super umeros scuta quatientium*, 2.22.1) in a manner like that of the legionaries in the *testudo* at Cremona II (*elatis super capita scutis*, 3.27.2). At both battles the legionaries are made to attack the camp's walls and gates (*legionarius ... subruit muros ... molitur portas*, 2.22.2; *uallum portasque legionibus*, 3.27.1). And Tacitus uses the same extraordinary language in each passage to capture the great, crushing weight of the boulders rolled down by the defenders: *molaris ingenti pondere ac fragore prouoluunt*, 2.22.2; *pondera saxorum Vitelliani prouoluunt*, 3.27.3. In the one other passage in which Tacitus uses *prouoluo* for "to roll forward (a weapon)," *Annals* 4.51.1, he describes the rocks that Roman defenders throw upon their Thracian attackers with different language (*congestas lapidum molis*, "piled up mounds of stones") from that at *Histories* 2.22.2 and 3.27.3. At *Histories* 4.23.2 and 4.29.3, the two other comparable passages about siege-defense in his corpus, Tacitus employs altogether much blander diction for describing this defensive tactic: *desuper saxis uolnerabantur* (4.23.2—"[the Batavians] were wounded by rocks from above"); *Romanus miles ... grauia saxa non forte iaciebat* (4.29.3—"The Roman soldiery was throwing heavy rocks, not at random").[25]

The result of the tumbling rocks at Placentia and Cremona II is the slaughter of the assailants (*stragem* at 2.22.2, much like *multa cum strage* at 3.27.3). Perhaps the closest connection between the two episodes comes in their conclusions, where the victims (Vitellian and Flavian, respectively) of the two counterstrikes are described with the very same—and elsewhere unfound[26]—pair of gory, visceral adjectives: *exsangues aut laceri* at 2.22.2, and *exsanguis aut laceros* at 3.27.3.

The great number of correspondences between these passages, in narrative movement and in diction, is not coincidental, and not merely a case of "self-imitation" as a substitute for historical research.[27] As with the psychological and behavioral repetitions at Cremona I and II that I considered above, the repetition in the sieges here is clearly part of Tacitus' narra-

[25] On the peculiarity of Tacitus' language for defense by boulders at 2.22.2 and 3.27.3, and the possible allusions to Virgil and Lucan here, see my discussion in the next section, with notes 30 and 35. Ash (2007a) on 2.22.2 makes the intriguing suggestion that Tacitus' *ingenti pondere ac fragore* is an expansion of Livy's pairing of *ingens* and *fragor* (four times) and *ingens* and *pondus* (three times).

[26] I have found no other passage in which these two adjectives are paired. The closest *locus* is Livy, 29.18.13: *legatus ... toto corpore* **laceratus**, *naso quoque auribusque decisis* **exsanguis** *est relictus*.

[27] See the argument by Woodman (1979) 147–149 on *Ann.* 1.61–62 and *Hist.* 2.70 (which I discuss below in note 69).

tive strategy. At Placentia the Vitellians fail to overcome the Othonians, but ultimately prevail in their struggle, at Cremona I. However, the meaninglessness of the Vitellians' success against Otho's men in Book 2 is highlighted by their repetition of the same contest—now as the besieged, not the besiegers—at Cremona II. As the mirroring diction informs us, the Vitellians now play the parts of the Othonians; and the Flavians—many of whom, as we have seen, are the very same praetorians who fought for Otho at Placentia and then Cremona I—now assume the role of the Vitellians. And, in an arc resembling that of the Othonians at Placentia / Cremona I, the besieged Vitellians have initial success here in 3.27, but will suffer defeat at the hands of the Flavians in 3.28–29. With the roles of winner and loser flip-flopped not only within each war's narrative, but also from one war to the next, the instability of such things as victory and defeat in civil war becomes clearer, and the assimilation of these civil warriors and wars emerges more conspicuously. As with the revisitations and repetitions of Galba's murder in the *Histories*, the repetitions that characterize these battles have a dark, compounding effect. Out of them comes only the grim sense of deepening, never-ending civil war.

Epic Battles Fought again at Cremona

The impression of gripping sameness at Cremona II is deepened by the close concentration in these chapters of allusions to Lucan's *Bellum Civile* and especially to the Trojan War of *Aeneid* 2 and the Latin War of *Aeneid* 7–12. Few other passages in the *Histories* have so many allusions to these authors clustered together: Cremona II is a central panel in Tacitus' program of epic allusion.

To begin our look at the carefully integrated epic roots of Cremona II, let us return to the siege of the Vitellian camp by the Flavians fighting under Antonius Primus.[28] I print again the end of the description of the Flavian attack, and its consequences, from 3.27.2–3:

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[28] It is notable that in his introductory character-sketch of Antonius Primus, Tacitus presents him as *discordiis et seditionibus potens* (2.86.2), a richly emulative allusion to *Aen.* 11.340, where the Latin Drances is described as *seditione potens*. Ash (2007a) ad loc. observes: "Drances (however acerbically) argues for peace, whereas Primus ardently pursues civil war. T. trumps Virgil's one abl. noun in the singular with two nouns in the pl., perhaps suggesting the huge scale of the violence triggered by Primus (whereas Drances is restricted to Italy)." The conqueror of Cremona is thus introduced as a sort of walking embodiment of Tacitean emulation of Virgil.

> tum elatis super capita scutis *densa testudine* succedunt. [3] Romanae utrimque artes: *pondera saxorum* Vitelliani *prouoluunt*, disiectam fluitantemque testudinem lanceis *contis*que scrutantur, donec *soluta compage scutorum* exsangues aut laceros *prosternerent* multa cum *strage*.

I have underlined the words that this passage shares with the description in *Aeneid* 9 of the Latins' attempt to take the Trojan camp set up in Latium. *Aeneid* 9.507–518 reads as follows:

> quaerunt pars aditum et scalis ascendere muros,
> qua rara est acies interlucetque corona
> non tam spissa uiris. telorum effundere contra
> omne genus Teucri ac duris detrudere **contis**,
> adsueti longo muros defendere bello.
> **saxa** quoque infesto **uoluebant pondere**, si qua
> possent tectam aciem perrumpere, cum tamen omnis
> ferre iuuet subter **densa testudine** casus.
> nec iam sufficiunt. nam qua globus imminet ingens,
> immanem Teucri molem uoluuntque ruuntque,
> quae **strauit** Rutulos late **armorumque resoluit**
> **tegmina**.

> Some seek an entrance, and to climb the walls with ladders, at points where the line is thin and where their defense, not as packed with men, shows daylight. In response the Teucrians poured out every type of weapon, and pushed them away with strong poles—accustomed as they were from their long war to defending walls. They also were rolling out rocks of threatening weight, to see if by chance they could break through that covered troop, although beneath the tightly-packed *testudo* [the Latins] were willing to suffer every type of strike. But they could not hold up any longer. For, wherever that huge ball of men threatened, the Teucrians rolled out and threw down a boulder, which laid low the Rutulians far and wide, and broke that covering of arms.

We see that in both sieges the assailants attack the fortress walls "in a tightly-packed *testudo*" (*densa testudine*). As I noted above, the *testudo* is a conventional inclusion in descriptions of sieges. But I would suggest that here Tacitus is calling to mind specifically the siege from *Aeneid* 9. The only other instance in Latin literature where *testudo* is modified by *densus* is during Lucan's account of Caesar's siege of Massilia in *Bellum Civile* 3, a passage that is likewise modeled on our *Aeneid* 9 passage.[29] At *BC* 3.474–484 Lucan describes the attack of the Roman *testudo* on Massilia's walls, which are being defended by the city's Greek inhabitants:

[29] Robbert (1917) 94 brings together these three instances of *densa testudine*, though without judgment on their relationship.

ut tamen hostiles **densa testudine** muros
tecta subit uirtus, armisque innexa priores
arma ferunt, galeamque extensus protegit umbo,
quae prius ex longo nocuerunt missa recessu
iam post terga cadunt. nec Grais flectere iactum
aut facilis labor est longinqua ad tela parati
tormenti mutare modum; sed **pondere** solo
contenti nudis **euoluunt saxa** lacertis.
dum fuit armorum series, ut grandine tecta
innocua percussa sonant, sic omnia tela
respuit.

Then the [Roman] force, covered in a tightly-packed *testudo*, attacked the enemy walls. The men in front kept their weapons attached to others' weapons, and the extended bosses of the shields protected their helmets. The missiles thrown from a great distance, which had harmed the *testudo* at first, were now falling behind their backs. Nor was it an easy task for the Greeks to alter their range, or to change the engine that was set for long-tossed weapons. But, striving with their bare arms, they rolled out rocks of great weight to the ground. While that structure of arms held up, it spat off every missile, just as a roof rattles when struck by harmless hail.

Along with the shared use of a "tightly-packed *testudo*," Virgil, Lucan and Tacitus all use, within one sentence, the very same words to describe the counterattack: *saxum*, *pondus*, and a form of *uoluo*.[30] And in both Virgil's (9.510) and Tacitus' (3.27.3) sieges the defenders also use long pikes (*contis*) to break up the *testudo*. At all three battles the result of the defense is temporary victory for the besieged, and the slaughter of many of the assailants. Further, at *Aeneid* 9.517–518 the Trojans' boulder "breaks that covering of arms" (*armorumque resoluit tegmina*); Tacitus employs the same verb, *soluo*, for the breaking of the *testudo*, as well as a similarly artful and vivid periphrasis for the *testudo* itself: *soluta compage scutorum*.[31] And of the resulting slaughter that concludes this episode he uses two derivatives of

[30] Hunink (1992a) on 3.481 observes the apparent influence of the Virgilian passage on the Lucanian passage, also noting (in n. 1) that "[t]he passages of Vergil and Lucan have further influenced Tac. *Hist.* 3.27." I have found no other passage including all three of these words used together. In two other descriptions of sieges a form of *uoluo* is combined with *saxum*: Sallust, *BC* 57.5 (*oppidani in proxumos saxa uoluere*) and Curtius, 8.11.13 (*ingentia saxa in subeuntes prouoluentibus barbaris*). At 6.691–692 Lucretius describes Mt. Etna as: *crassa uoluit caligine fumum | extruditque simul mirando pondere saxa* (where *extrudit* is the verb governing *saxa*).

[31] Lucan's periphrasis for the *testudo* (*armorum series*, *BC* 3.482) may also be drawn from Virgil's *armorum tegmina*. On such periphrases as a hallmark of poetic and Virgilian style, see Horsfall (2000) on *Aen.* 7.632.

sterno (**prosternerent** *multa cum* **strage**, 3.27.3). Virgil had likewise ended his description of the failed attack with a form of this brutal verb (*strauit*, at *Aeneid* 9.517).

The parallels here in diction are many. When we also consider that Dio, in his lengthy account of Cremona II and its aftermath (65.11–15), makes no mention at all of the Flavian *testudo* or the Vitellian defense of their camp, then it is not a stretch to conclude that Tacitus has crafted his siege at Cremona as a grim recurrence of not just the one at Placentia in *Histories* 2 but also the siege in *Aeneid* 9. And, significantly, the siege of the Trojan camp in *Aeneid* 9 to which Tacitus directs us is already a manifestly repetitive one, of the siege of Troy itself, as narrated at *Aeneid* 2.438–468,[32] with the Trojans in Latium reassuming their all too familiar roles as wall-defenders (note 9.511: *adsueti longo muros defendere bello*).[33] But the Trojans in Latium will in fact succeed in warding off their attackers later in Book 9, and will then prevail in the Latin War, as they did not at Troy. In the civil conflict fought between Roman armies at Cremona, on the other hand, there can be no real reversal, no progressive repetition like the Trojans' in the *Aeneid*, no victory. The combatants at Cremona and in the *Histories* never do "come out on the other side," changed and progressed, but they remain in a way stuck, eternally fighting at this siege, in this war. As I have discussed in previous chapters,[34] this type of static, regressive repetition is present in the *Aeneid*, but it exists alongside a progressive, foundational repetition—which, I maintain, is programmatically absent from the surviving books of the *Histories*.

If we look back for a moment into *Histories* 2 and to the siege at Placentia, we see that there too Virgil's language for siege-craft may have influenced Tacitus. The verbal parallels are fewer, but, as Ash has suggested, the phrase *fulgentes* **armis uiris***que campi* (2.22.1) at the opening of the account may serve to trigger memory of the *Aeneid* by invocation of the poem's famous opening line. And, as we have seen, in his description of the counterstrike and slaughter at 2.22.2 Tacitus employs phrasing (*molares ingenti* **pondere** *ac fragore* **prouoluunt** … **stragem**) comparable to that in *Histories*

[32] See Raabe (1974) 199–202 and Rossi (2004) 180–184 on the parallels between the sieges in *Aen.* 2 and 9.

[33] "The Trojans seem doomed to repeat in their new home their experiences in Troy … V's reader experiences a sense of *déjà vu* from the events of 2.438–505," comments Hardie (1994) ad loc.

[34] See esp. the Introduction and my discussion of Galba and Priam in Chapter 2.

3.27.3 and at *Aeneid* 9.512 and 9.517.[35] It may be that Tacitus, in fashioning the repetitive sieges in the Othonian-Vitellian war and the Vitellian-Flavian war, conceived of both as repetitions of Virgil's siege. If this is the case, the sense of static and thus regressive repetition is compounded further, these battles growing still deeper and more inescapable textual roots.

For similar reasons, the simultaneous activation of the siege at Massilia in *Bellum Civile* 3, itself an adaptation of the siege in *Aeneid* 9, serves to further trap the actors at Cremona II in their static roles. Along with the dictional similarities discussed above (recall *densa testudine* and *pondere … euoluunt saxa* from *BC* 3.474–484), two additional phrases in Tacitus' siege-account appear to signal engagement with Lucan. At 3.27.3 Tacitus describes the rupture of the Flavian *testudo* with the phrase *soluta compage scutorum*. The phrase is conspicuous for its characteristically Virgilian periphrasis (see above), but also for its possible provenance in the apocalyptic vocabulary of the *Bellum Civile*. Shortly after the excerpt from *Bellum Civile* 3 that I have printed above, the attacking Romans are described as trying to "break the structure of the dense wall" (*densi compagem soluere muri*, 3.491) at Massilia. Lucan's use of *soluere* with *compages* lends literally earth-shattering overtones to the fight, since he had used the collocation in the programmatic passage 1.70–82, where he presents the fated fall of all great things, with imagery drawn from the Stoic conception of the collapse of the universe. Pivotal in this collapse—a collapse that is mirrored in the civil war that makes up Lucan's poem—is the dissolution of the universe's framework, captured succinctly with the phrase *compage soluta* ("when the structure is broken") in 1.72.[36] The phrase, then, is a loaded one, both in the *Bellum Ciuile* and at Cremona in *Histories* 3. Tacitus' use of the very same morphological phrase *compage soluta* at 3.27.3 works on the technical level to describe the breaking of the Flavian *testudo*. But it also serves, I suggest, to signal Lucan's

35 Tacitus' *molares ingenti* **pondere** *ac fragore* **prouoluunt** (2.22.2) ← Virgil's *saxa quoque infesto* **uoluebant pondere** (9.512) is the one specific allusion for which Ash (2002) 268–272 argues, while also comparing in general the two authors' uses of the technical language of Roman siege-craft. Ash goes on to suggest that Tacitus "creates a sense of bathos and decline" (271) by presenting the fighters at Placentia as less impressive and cohesive than those at the Trojan camp in *Aen.* 9, and the fight as more realistic and gory than Virgil's.

36 On the use of *compages* by Lucan and other Stoics to describe the structure of the universe, see Lapidge (1979) 360–361. And Roche (2009) ad loc. aptly remarks: "Through its more literal definitions … *conpage soluta* also echoes the imagery of architectural ruination that pervades the poem." Lucan's contemporary Persius also uses the collocation *compages* + *soluo* at 3.58. After them it appears at Stat. *Theb.* 8.31, Sil. 16.606–607, and Apul. *Mun.* 32 (as Roche notes).

influence to the reader, and to elevate the slaughter at the Vitellian camp to the grand level of the universal chaos and ruin of Lucan's civil war.

Just a few lines above the phrase *compage soluta* in Lucan's introduction, the poet had described the task he was undertaking: *immensumque aperitur opus* (1.68: "an immeasurable work opens before me"). In Chapter 1 I discussed Tacitus' launching of an *opus* at *Histories* 1.2.1 that is greater and more expansive than Virgil's *maius opus* and Lucan's *immensum opus*. Here at Cremona Tacitus may refer to Lucan's phrase again, when, at the beginning of his account of the siege, he writes of the Flavian army: *ut Cremonam uenere, nouum immensumque opus occurrit* (*Hist.* 3.26.1: "As they came to Cremona, a new and immeasurable task met them"). Here *opus* refers on the plainest level to the Vitellian camp that confronted the Flavians. But if with the words *immensumque opus* Tacitus is referring to Lucan's programmatic phrase, then he is setting up the siege in the following chapter as a *new* (*nouum*) manifestation of Lucanian war. And by alluding to this line in the *Bellum Civile* that operates with a rich travel metaphor (*immensum* + *aperio*),[37] Tacitus may be suggesting in an additional, complementary way that his literary effort is a journey that continues Lucan's.

I conclude my discussion of the sieges in *Aeneid* 9, *Bellum Civile* 3, and *Histories* 3 by noting a meaningful difference at the last of these—a difference that comes out, in fact, in a pointed *lack* of difference at the battle. Both Virgil and Lucan underline contrasts between the two sides at their sieges. In Latium the Rutulians attack in the characteristically Roman *testudo*, while the Trojans, as we have seen, use their own native skill, wall defense (*adsueti longo muros defendere bello*, 9.511). At Massilia too Lucan conspicuously distinguishes the combatants in his civil-war clash. Caesar's Roman troops of course use the *testudo*, while the Greekness of the Massilians is underscored when Lucan begins his description of their counterattack with *nec Grais* ... (3.478). Here amid Lucan's civil war is a struggle between Caesar's brutish Romans and the more deliberative and defensive Massilian Greeks.[38]

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[37] See *OLD* 4a for *aperio* as "to clear open (a path)" and 9a for "to open up (territory)." *Immensus* (*OLD* 1a: "immeasurable in extent, boundless") is from *metior*, whose sense of "to pace; traverse" is *OLD* 3. I thank Tony Woodman for pointing me to the metaphor that is operative here.

[38] See too the opposition and distinct contrast highlighted just a few lines above, at 3.463–464: *sed maior Graio Romana in corpora ferro* | *uis inerat*. Earlier in the account Lucan presents the Massilians' lengthy, reasoned plea for peace (3.307–355), and then Caesar's short, fiery rejection of that plea (3.358–372). Hunink (1992a) on 3.302 (with n. 2 on page 146) also notes how Lucan may have chosen to emphasize that this battle was one between Romans and Greeks, in the build-up to the climactic meeting of Romans and Romans at Pharsalus.

The differences on the two sides that are underscored at these model sieges collapse in Tacitus' repetition of them. As we have seen, the military tactics (*testudo*, defense by rolling out stones from above) are identical at all three sieges, and described with matching language. But, as opposed to Virgil and Lucan, Tacitus emphasizes the specific Romanness of *both* the attack by *testudo and* the defense with boulders: *Romanae utrimque artes* (3.27.3: "On each side were Roman ways of war"). The pithy phrase reads like special artistic pleading by Tacitus, especially in light of the fact that the Vitellian defense is made up in large part of German warriors. But with the line he is able to punctuate again the sameness that defines his wars, here by making the warring sides mirroring doubles of each other. And indeed, we recall, each side had just played the other side's part at his account of Placentia. And so with this succinct statement—pointedly placed between the most conspicuous allusions to the epic scenes—Tacitus announces in another way that his siege-scene at Cremona outdoes Virgil's and Lucan's, in that his battle is more Roman, and more civil.

The Settlement of Cremona—into Flames

After establishing in the siege attempt at 3.27 that the fight for Cremona may be read as a futile and regressive reenactment of similar struggles in the *Aeneid* and *Bellum Civile*, Tacitus continues to build upon images from Virgil's wars in the chapters that follow. The repetitions often come when he is capturing in a short phrase or *sententia* the general atmosphere at Cremona. In 3.28 the Flavians renew their assault on the Vitellian camp, this time successfully reaching the walls. Baxter has argued that the verbs used to describe their attack (*quatio, scando, prenso*) are Virgilian in origin.[39] Certainly reminiscent of Virgil's Troy is the final image that Tacitus leaves us with, before moving to a different episode in the battle: *integri cum sauciis, semineces cum expirantibus uoluuntur, uaria pereuntium forma et* **omni imagine mortium.** In the Introduction I discussed the bold adaptation of *Aeneid* 2.369 (*plurima mortis imago*) in this line, in which the variety of death and quantity of corpses at Cremona grow almost infinitely larger than the already sizeable and horrific numbers at Virgil's Troy.

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39 Baxter (1971) 95–96 discusses how in 3.28 Tacitus packs into one sentence several verbs with which Virgil describes the attack on Troy: *quatio* (*Aen.* 2.611), *scando* (2.237), and *prenso* (2.444). At 97–98 he addresses the use in the Cremona passage of *labor*, *subeo*, *obruo*, and other verbs of motion, which "echo one of the dominant images of *Aeneid* 2, the violent forces of nature which destroy Troy" (98).

Soon after narrating the Flavians' bloody victory at the Vitellian camp, Tacitus describes in 3.30 their advance into Cremona itself. He begins by writing: *ac rursus* **noua laborum facies** ("And, yet again, there were new forms of difficulties [in the city itself]"). This phrase refers to the physical challenges that are then listed: *ardua urbis moenia, saxeae turres, ferrati portarum obices*, "the steep walls of the city, the towers made of stone, the iron-barred gates," and then the multitude of town inhabitants and visiting fair-goers who follow in Tacitus' description. But the wording of this introductory phrase is clearly taken from the beginning of *Aeneid* 6. At 6.83–97 the Cumaean Sibyl describes to Aeneas the wars that await him in Italy, and explicitly casts them as new manifestations of the Trojan War.[40] Aeneas begins his response to her warnings by saying, at 6.103–105:

> non ulla **laborum**,
> o uirgo, **noua** mi **facies** inopinaue surgit
> omnia praecepi atque animo mecum ante peregi.
>
> No new or unexpected form of toil confronts me, dear maiden. I have foreseen all of this, and in my mind I have gone through it all before.

So Aeneas states that the wars in Latium will be nothing new to him: he has been cautioned about, and has considered, the troubles to come. But if we consider the explicit parallels between the Trojan and Latin wars that the Sibyl has just made, then Aeneas here is also appealing to his experiences at Troy: he has endured the Trojan War, and, while the toils in Italy will be a great challenge to him, he has already lived through them.

The sentiment expressed at *Aeneid* 6.103–105 was memorable enough for Seneca to quote these lines in full in the peroration of a letter about living honorably and enduring hardships (*Epistulae Morales* 76.33). Tacitus has also quoted the lines, using Virgil's precise words when writing of the *noua laborum facies* that confronted the Flavians in Cremona. The allusion here to these particularly polyvalent lines in the *Aeneid*—lines that succinctly capture the inherent repetitiveness of Virgil's wars—is as conspicuous an embrace of Virgilian thematic repetition as we encounter in the *Histories*. The phrase, placed right in the middle of Cremona II, leaps out and asserts that Tacitus' Cremonas and his wars generally fall squarely in the tradition of Virgil's Trojan and Latin Wars.[41] And the opening tag *ac*

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[40] Replete with new versions of the characters and topography familiar from the Trojan War, as made clear at 6.88–91: *non Simois tibi nec Xanthus nec Dorica castra | defuerint; alius Latio iam partus Achilles, | natus et ipse dea; nec Teucris addita Iuno | usquam aberit.*

[41] So Baxter (1971) 99: "Tacitus' imitation of this Virgilian phrase which recalls the great

rursus may serve as a signpost of Tacitus' "repetitive" embrace of Virgil.[42] At the strictly narrative level, these words indicate that the task of penetrating Cremona is yet another new challenge for the attacking Flavians. But, if we are mindful of the Virgilian lines that lie behind the description at 3.30.1, then the words *ac rursus noua laborum facies* also hammer home that these "new forms of toil" are not so new for Rome: they are happening *again*. And with each sign of iteration, each layer of repetition—inter- and intratextually—these toils grow doggedly worse.

The striking allusions at 3.28 and 3.30.1, and indeed all of the Virgilian allusions clustered together at Cremona II, are building up to the crowning allusion that appears in the description of the city's burning (3.33.2), after its subjection to plunder.[43] Above in this chapter I discussed Tacitus' mirroring descriptions of the plunder of the towns and colonies of northern Italy after Cremona I (2.56.1), and of Cremona itself after Cremona II (3.33.1–2). The latter passage, which is rife with Virgilian allusions, now merits printing in full:

> quadraginta armatorum milia inrupere, calonum lixarumque amplior numerus et in libidinem ac saeuitiam corruptior. non dignitas, non aetas protegebat quo minus stupra caedibus, caedes stupris miscerentur. grandaeuos senes, exacta aetate feminas, uilis ad praedam, in ludibrium trahebant: ubi adulta uirgo aut quis forma conspicuus incidisset, ui manibusque rapientium diuulsus ipsos postremo direptores in mutuam perniciem agebat. dum pecuniam uel **grauia auro templorum dona** sibi quisque trahunt, maiore aliorum ui truncabantur. [2] quidam obuia aspernati uerberibus tormentisque dominorum abdita scrutari, defossa eruere: faces in manibus, quas, ubi praedam egesserant, **in uacuas domos et inania templa** per lasciuiam iaculabantur. utque exercitu uario linguis moribus, cui ciues socii externi interessent, diuersae cupidines et aliud cuique fas nec quicquam inlicitum. per quadriduum

struggles of the Trojans in Italy thus expands the meaning and significance of the battle for Cremona." Baxter does not elaborate on this meaning and significance. Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc. and Wellesley (1972) ad loc. also note the correspondence.

42 See the similar point made by Manolaraki (2005) 260 about Tacitus' metatextual use of *uestigia* at *Hist.* 2.70.1, as well as the more general discussion of historians' uses of markers of intertextuality by O'Gorman (2009) 241. On the signposting of allusions by Roman poets, see Hinds (1998) 1–5 and Hardie (1993a) 17, who lists *rursus* among the "words of iteration … whose occurrence in epic is always worth attention."

43 In the movements towards 3.33.2, note also the description of the Flavian troops making their way into Cremona, at 3.31.1: *iam legiones in testudinem glomerabantur* ("now the legions were conglobating into a *testudo*"). This is Tacitus' only use of *glomero*, which Virgil uses seventeen times, often of troops congregating for attack, at Troy in Book 2, as well as in Latium in Books 7–12 (at e.g. *Aen.* 2.315, 2.727, 9.689 and 9.792). On Virgil's fondness for *glomero*, see Hardie (1994) on *Aen.* 9.33–34.

> Cremona suffecit. cum **omnia** sacra profanaque **in ignes considerent**, solum Mefitis templum stetit ante moenia, loco seu numine defensum.
>
> Forty thousand armed men burst into Cremona, and the number of sutlers and camp-followers was greater, and they were more easily corrupted into lust and cruelty. Neither standing nor age was protection from rape being mixed with slaughter, and slaughter with rape. Long-lived old men, and women of advanced age, worthless as booty, were dragged off for sport. Whenever a young woman or handsome man was encountered, that person was torn apart by the violent hands of those preying upon him, and this eventually drove the predators themselves to their mutual destruction. As individuals dragged off for themselves loot or temple offerings heavy with gold, they were being cut down by the greater violence of others. [2] Some, spurning what was in front of them, searched for hidden things and dug up what was buried—after beating and torturing the rightful owners. In their hands they had torches, which, after they had carried out their booty, they were hurling into abandoned homes and empty temples, as a joke. And since the army was diverse, with different languages and customs, made up of citizens, allies, and foreigners, there were disparate desires, and to each was his own law, nor was anything forbidden. For a four-day period Cremona satisfied them. When all things sacred and profane settled down into flames, only the Temple of Mefitis outside the walls stood, defended by its location or by the god's power.

This elaborate account, which has no equivalent in the parallel tradition, seems to be pure Tacitean invention. In fact, it is startling just how closely Tacitus' *exaedificatio* of the sack of Cremona seems to adhere to the prescriptions of Quintilian, in his outline at *Institutio Oratoria* 8.67–70 of which ingredients one might add to expand upon the report of a captured city. In order to penetrate into the audience's emotions (*in adfectus ... penetrat*, 8.67), Quintilian tells us, the speaker may add "flames pouring through houses and temples" (*effusae per domus ac templa flammae*, *IO* 8.68), which Tacitus includes (*faces ... in uacuas domos et inania templa*, 3.33.2); victims of all ages (compare *IO* 8.68, *infantium feminarumque ploratus et male usque in illum diem seruati fato senes*, "the wailing of babies and women, and old men sadly preserved by fate to see that day" and 3.33.1, *non dignitas, non aetas protegebat ... grandaeuos senes, exacta aetate feminas, uilis ad praedam, in ludibrium trahebant: ubi adulta uirgo aut quis forma conspicuus incidisset*); "the plundering of things profane and sacred" (*illa profanorum sacrorumque direptio*, *IO* 8.69), not omitted by Tacitus (*cum omnia sacra profanaque in ignes considerent*, 3.33.2); and "a fight among the victors over the greatest loot" (*sicubi maius lucrum est, pugna inter uictores*, *IO* 8.69), also included here at Cremona (*dum pecuniam uel grauia auro templorum dona sibi quisque trahunt, maiore aliorum ui truncabantur*).

It is clear that Tacitus, like so many other authors who depict an *urbs capta*,[44] has built up the sack of Cremona with these stock elements. His allegiance to Quintilian's guidelines makes Tacitus' *urbs capta* a nearly perfect case of the *topos* at work. But the historian makes it his own. And, just as in the scenes at Cremona II leading up to the sack, engagement with Virgil is pervasive. Firstly, Tacitus has taken the phrase *grauia auro templorum dona* from *Aeneid* 3.464, where Helenus' gifts for the Trojans are described as "gifts heavy with gold" (*dona ... auro grauia*). When given a textual provenance in the temples overseen by the Apollonian prophet Helenus, the plundered temple offerings in Cremona grow even heavier, and holier, and the sacrilege of the looters' actions is intensified.

In the next sentence Tacitus takes the conventional inclusion of enflamed houses and temples and casts a specifically Virgilian gloom over them, by describing them as *uacuas domos et inania templa* (3.33.2). He has drawn these descriptors for the city's emptiness from *Aeneid* 6.269, a brief snapshot of the Underworld as Aeneas and the Sibyl are passing through: [*ibant*] *perque* **domos** *Ditis* **uacuas et inania regna** ("[they were passing] through the abandoned homes of Dis and the empty realms").[45] The verbal allusion is complemented by a metrical one, as the hexametrical rhythm of dactyl-dactyl-spondee with which Tacitus concludes his phrase (-*os et inania templa*) recalls Virgil's -*as et inania regna*. Burning Cremona is thus turned for a moment into the Hell of *Aeneid* 6. And there may be more to the allusion. Conte has discussed the subtle enallage in Virgil's *inania regna*, which "are literally not 'the empty realms' but 'the realms of those

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44 See e.g. Polybius 2.56 (a critique of Phylarchus' conventional description of the capture of Mantinea), Demosthenes, *De falsa legatione* 65.361, Sallust, *BC* 51.9, Livy 1.29 and 5.42, and Virgil, *Aen.* 2, along with the many other examples discussed by Paul (1982) and Rossi (2004) 17–30. Kraus (1994b) looks closely at Livy's use of the *topos* in Book 5. And on Tacitus' employment of many of the features of this motif throughout his historical writing, see now Keitel (2010) 337–344 on the *Ann.* and 344–351 on the *Hist.*

45 Wellesley (1972) and Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc note the correspondence. Both also point to the recurrence of these adjectives in succession at *Hist.* 5.9.1, of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem: *uacuam sedem et inania arcana*.

As Stephen Harrison has pointed out to me, Tacitus may prepare us for this brief visit to Virgil's Hell a few chapters earlier. As we saw above, at *Hist.* 3.30.1 Tacitus describes the new challenges that the city of Cremona presents to the Flavian army: *ardua urbis moenia, saxeae turres, ferrati portarum obices*. This description of the entrance to Cremona is reminiscent of Virgil's portrait of the entrance to Tartarus, at *Aen.* 6.548–554: *respicit Aeneas subito et sub rupe sinistra* | **moenia lata** *uidet triplici circumdata muro,* | *quae rapidus flammis ambit torrentibus amnis,* | *Tartareus Phlegethon, torquetque* **sonantia saxa.** | **porta** *aduersa* **ingens** *solidoque adamante columnae,* | *uis ut nulla uirum, non ipsi exscindere bello* | *caelicolae ualeant; stat* **ferrea turris** *ad auras.*

who are evanescent because they lack a body'"[46]—that is, "ghostly realms." Now, Tacitus' *inania templa* conveys on the plainest level that Cremona's temples have been emptied of their treasures.[47] But through the allusion to Virgil's *inania regna*, we also get the sense that now just the ghosts of the gods occupy these temples. And so here at Cremona II, as at Galba's death and at the burning of the Capitol, the gods are depicted as abandoning the Romans, in this case literally vanishing. The impression of willful divine abandonment is also left by the final sentence of 3.33, in which Tacitus raises the possibility that the Temple of Mefitis may have been Cremona's only surviving building because it was defended by its deity (*seu numine defensum*, 3.33.2). The implication, which is consistent with my reading of *inania templa*, is that the city's other gods had no interest in defending their temples. And perhaps it is fitting that the goddess Mefitis, a personification of chthonic and volcanic vapors with clear hellish associations, is the deity that sticks around in the Hell that Cremona has become.[48]

After this momentary evocation of Virgil's Hell, Tacitus concludes the Fall of Cremona by pointing once more to the Fall of Troy.[49] Here again is the final line of 3.33.2, and then the opening of 3.34.1:

> cum **omnia** sacra profanaque **in ignes considerent**, solum Mefitis templum stetit ante moenia, loco seu numine defensum. hic exitus Cremonae anno ducentisimo octogesimo sexto a primordio sui.
>
> When all things sacred and profane settled down into flames, only the Temple of Mefitis outside the walls stood, defended by its location or by the god's power. This was the end of Cremona, in the two-hundred and eighty-sixth year from its beginning.

Just before the city's epitaph proper, which begins with *hic exitus* (3.34.1), Tacitus' final words for Cremona lay it to rest in flames. The words of fiery repose *omnia ... in ignes considerent* follow closely the words that Aeneas

46 Conte (2007) 97.

47 Church and Brodribb (1942) 557, Wellesley (1964) 165, and Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc. limit the phrase to this meaning in their translations.

48 No other source mentions a temple to Mefitis at Cremona. On the goddess see Servius ad *Aen.* 7.84 and Mastronique (1999), with further bibliography.

49 Also possibly demonstrating that in crafting the Fall of Cremona Tacitus is mindful of Virgil (though to my mind not providing any significant thematic import) are *exarsere uictores* at 3.31.4 (cf. the similarly metaphorical *exarsere ignes animo* at *Aen.* 2.575, with Baxter (1971) 99–100 and Foucher (2000) 418–419); and *grandaeuos senes* at 3.33.1 (cf. *Aen.* 2.525 *longaeuum* [*Priamum*] and 5.715 *longaeuosque senes*, with Baxter (1971) 100 and Heubner (1972) ad loc.).

uses of Troy at 2.624–625.[50] There Virgil's hero recalls what he saw when fleeing the city, with the vision granted him by Venus:

> tum uero **omne** mihi **uisum considere in ignis**
> **Ilium** et ex imo uerti Neptunia Troia.

> Then truly all of Ilium seemed to me to settle down into flames, and Neptune's Troy to be overturned from her depths.

Aeneas's recollection of burning Troy in Book 2 is itself meaningfully recalled in a passage in Book 9. At *Aeneid* 9.123–127 Turnus sees the Trojan ships transformed into sea nymphs by the goddess Cybele. Rather than being frightened by the awesome sight, he responds with enthusiasm: in the disappearance of their fleet he sees a dark omen for the Trojans, and encouragement for the Latin cause. He takes this opportunity to incite his fellow Rutulians to attack the Trojan camp. In his speech Turnus points to the Trojans' failure in similar circumstances at Troy (9.142–145):

> quibus haec medii fiducia ualli
> fossarumque morae, leti discrimina parua,
> dant animos. at non **uiderunt moenia Troiae**
> Neptuni fabricata manu **considere in ignis**?

> This faith in an intervening rampart and in the delay of ditches—meager disjunctions from death—gives them courage. But did they not see the walls of Troy, which were built by the hand of Neptune, settle down into flames?

Turnus questions the Trojans' hopes: did they not see what happened to the much mightier walls of Troy? After his attack on their camp, he implies, the Trojans will suffer again what they suffered at Troy, and again see the walls of Troy sink into flames (*moenia Troiae | … considere in ignis*).[51]

Turnus' predictions are of course off the mark: his effort to topple the Trojan camp in Book 9 ultimately fails, and at the poem's conclusion he and his cause are defeated. But despite the character Turnus' misreading of the situation, with this intratextual allusion to Book 2 the poet Virgil perpetuates his presentation of the conflict in Latium as a reenactment of the conflict at Troy. The names are now changed—Turnus becomes the

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[50] As noted by Schmaus (1887) 49, Spooner (1891) ad loc., Austin (1964) on *Aen.* 2.624, Baxter (1971) 100, Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc, and Keitel (2010) 348.

[51] Though Turnus mentions Neptune's role as the builder of Troy's walls as a credit to their strength, the reference here recalls the significance of the naming of Neptune at *Aen.* 2.625, that is, to underscore the irony that the god was both the builder *and* the destroyer of the Trojan walls (cf. 2.610–612).

"Trojan" loser, as the many allusions in his speech to the speeches of Hector in the *Iliad* indicate[52]—but the destruction of proto-Romans recurs. And city walls will again sink into flames, not the walls of the Trojan camp, but the walls of Latinus' city. Indeed, in Book 12 Virgil, through a series of precise intratexts, casts the burning of Latinus' city as a reenactment of the burning of Troy.[53]

Virgil's uses of *consido* at 2.624 and 9.145 are unique in his poetry. The verb appears twelve other times in the *Aeneid*, always of people's actions.[54] He uses it either of physically sitting down (on a ship's benches, at camp, at a feast—a total of six times), or, just as often, of settling one's people.[55] The relative frequency of these other uses brings out the peculiarity of the uses in our two passages, and so corroborates the close connection between the two passages. And the appearances at 2.624 and 9.145 gain greater distinction and potency when we consider that in these passages the verb comes to mean the opposite of settling a civilization. Here *consido* marks the *fall* of a civilization, first the fall of Rome's prototype Troy, and then, by implication, the repetition of that fall in Books 7–12. Here in the midst of Virgil's foundation story, the opposite of the founding of a civilization—namely, dissolution and destruction—is taking place.

Tacitus' use of *consido* at 3.33.2 is just as extraordinary as Virgil's at *Aeneid* 2.624 and 9.145. *Consido* occurs twenty-one times in the extant Tacitean corpus. Four times he uses it of physically sitting down, fourteen times of settlement at a geographical location, and twice of political affairs settling down. The appearance at 3.33.2 marks the only time when he employs the verb *proprie* of things, the only time when he uses it as "to sink," and the only instance when he joins it with *in* plus the accusative.[56] What is more, the *TLL* lists just one other passage (apart from the two in the *Aeneid* and *Histories* 3.33.2) that has *consido in* with the accusative for "cities or buildings falling."[57]

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52 On which see Hardie (1994) on 9.123–175 and his subsequent notes.

53 See note 12 in the Introduction.

54 *Consido* also appears once in the *Georgics*, at 4.65 of bees sitting down near their favorite scents.

55 Sitting down: *Aen.* 3.289, 4.573, 5.136, 7.176, 10.5, and 11.915. Settling a people: 1.572, 3.162, 3.378, 4.349, 6.67, and 11.323.

56 Gerber and Greef (1903) 209 catalogue the 21 appearances of *consido*, and list 3.33.2 as the only use of the verb *proprie, de rebus*.

57 *TLL* 4.435.67 ff. The other passage is Stat. *Theb.* 3.185 (*cum regia Cadmi fulmineum in cinerem consedit*), to which Snijder (1968) ad loc. compares the two Virgilian passages. See also Seneca, *Phoen.* 34–35: *ab imo tota considat domus.*

The uniqueness of Virgil's and Tacitus' uses of *consido in ignis* confirms the latter's allusion to the former in our passage. Also linking *Aeneid* 2.624 and our passage is the application of the totalizing adjective *omnis* to the subjects of *consido* in both passages (*omne Ilium; omnia sacra profanaque*). Furthermore, the tag *hic exitus* at 3.34.1 is also used of Priam's, and thus Troy's, death at *Aeneid* 2.554–556: *haec finis Priami fatorum,* **hic exitus** *illum | sorte tulit Troiam incensam et prolapsa uidentem | Pergama* ("This end of the fates of Priam, this death led him by chance to see Troy burned down, and Pergamum fallen").

The presence of the epitaphic phrase *hic exitus* at Troy and then Cremona may serve to link the two falls, and indeed also evoke the fall of Galba (to whom I return shortly). But it is the clear-cut evocation of Virgil at 3.33.2 that most conspicuously figures the destruction at Cremona as another fall in the series of falls first suffered by Virgil's proto-Romans in the *Aeneid*. As we have seen, in Virgil's wars *consido* (*in ignis*) marks the collapse of civilization—and the image is all the more powerful because this sense of *consido* is so contrary to the verb's more common association with the settlement of civilization. With Tacitus' pointed allusion to the Virgilian phrase, placed here at the conclusion of Cremona II, the historian hammers home the theme running through his account of the two Cremonas, and indeed throughout *Histories* 1–3. The repetitions that beset this narrative have nothing foundational or constructive to them. They mark only the collapse and ongoing fall of Rome.[58] This allusion at 3.33.2, working in concert with the other allusions to the *Aeneid* clustered together at Cremona II, is perfectly representative of Tacitus' thematically regressive but artistically emulative manner of allusion to Virgil in the *Histories*. The *Aeneid*, as I have discussed, offers both images of foundation / progress and images of dissolution / regression. But Tacitus' allusive eye is drawn almost exclusively to the latter element in Virgil. And in the case of 3.33.2, he seizes on a set of images (2.624–625 and 9.144–145) that gain their potency from playing off of the triumph of dissolution over foundation, of fall over rise. Tacitus' attraction to precisely such images in Virgil speaks to a fundamental—and fundamentally emulative—difference: that the parallel foundational arc that runs

[58] Baxter (1971) 100 similarly reads Tacitus at 3.33.2 as commenting on a general phenomenon: "Tacitus deliberately avoids specifying the city as Virgil does because he wants to paint a scene of complete conflagration and to apply the phrase in a general sense to the destruction of the Roman world. The sack of Cremona, after all, is only the prelude to more significant events which follow—the burning of the Capitol and the death of Vitellius."

alongside a countervailing gloomier arc in the *Aeneid* is much less muted, if existent at all, in the downward spiraling narrative of the *Histories*.

I shall turn in this work's Epilogue to the possible extension of this reading of regressive repetition into the *Histories*' later books, and the resulting interpretive consequences. For now I conclude my discussion of 3.26–34 by noting just how many of the disquieting conditions and seemingly climactic horrors of Cremona II—the fighting among doubles, the plunder of their own, the abject failure of leadership, the angry disappearance of the gods—are to be repeated and yet again escalated at Rome herself in the final fifteen chapters of *Histories* 3, chapters that also, as we saw in Chapter 2, fitfully bring to mind Galba's end. And there in the burning of the Capitol and the subsequent warring are, again, Virgil's wars, still being repeated and refought. In Chapter 2 and now Chapter 3 I have looked at the Galba → Capitol and Cremona I → II progressions (or, rather, regressions) separately. But of course these episodes are of a piece in this narrative of disaster and descent, this *opus … opimum casibus, atrox proeliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace saeuum*. And in fact, the funerary tag *hic exitus Cremonae* at 3.34.1 brings to mind the weighty *hunc exitum habuit Seruius Galba* at 1.49.2, which itself may look ahead to Flavius Sabinus' similar fall amid the burning of the Capitol (see *hic exitus* … at 3.75.1). Though the formula *hic exitus* is not uncommon in literary epitaphs,[59] it is notable that Tacitus uses it only in these three thematically linked passages. And each of them, perhaps, points us back to Virgil's one use of the formula, of Priam's and Troy's seminal end at *Aeneid* 2.554.[60]

A Snapshot of Civil War's Repetitiveness: Hist. *2.70*

During his lengthy account of Vitellius' march through Italy to Rome (2.57–73), Tacitus pauses and commits a full chapter (2.70) to the emperor's visit to the fields of Bedriacum, where his forces had prevailed over Otho's some forty days earlier. The passage is unforgettable, and indeed has received a great amount of attention from readers of the *Histories*.[61] Many have discussed the significant differences between Tacitus' presentation of this

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[59] See Woodman (1983) on Vell. Pat. 2.53.3 and 2.72.1 and MacL. Currie (1989).

[60] Wellesley (1972) ad loc. compares 3.34.1 and *Aen*. 2.554–556; and he (*contra* Heubner) prints *hic exitus Cremon***am** … **tulit**, which is closer to Virgil's *hic exitus* **illum** | *sorte* **tulit**.

[61] See esp. Woodman (1979), Funari (1989), Keitel (1992), Morgan (1992), Lauletta (1998) 300–306, Pagán (2000) 428–430, Perutelli (2004) 100–107, and Manolaraki (2005).

scene and those by Suetonius (*Vitellius* 10.3) and Dio (65.1.3). The feature of *Histories* 2.70 on which I will focus—and which is entirely missing from Suetonius' and Dio's accounts—is Tacitus' method in this chapter of spotlighting, through intra- and intertextual references, the repetitiveness of the Cremonas, and of his civil wars. This is the stylistic effect I have studied throughout this chapter. Here in 2.70—which takes place at the site of the two battles and occurs chronologically between them—Tacitus peers backward and forward, and captures in a striking snapshot the repetitive dynamics of his wars. I reprint the full chapter here:

> inde Vitellius Cremonam flexit et spectato munere Caecinae insistere Bedriacensibus campis ac uestigia recentis uictoriae lustrare oculis concupiuit. foedum atque atrox spectaculum, intra quadragensimum pugnae diem lacera corpora, trunci artus, putres uirorum equorumque formae, infecta tabo humus, protritis arboribus ac frugibus dira uastitas. [2] nec minus inhumana pars uiae, quam Cremonenses lauru rosaque constrauerant, exstructis altaribus caesisque uictimis regium in morem; quae laeta in praesens mox perniciem ipsis fecere. [3] aderant Valens et Caecina monstrabantque pugnae locos: hinc inrupisse legionum agmen, hinc equites coortos, inde circumfusas auxiliorum manus; iam tribuni praefectique, sua quisque facta extollentes, falsa uera aut maiora uero miscebant. uolgus quoque militum clamore et gaudio deflectere uia, spatia certaminum recognoscere, aggerem armorum, strues corporum intueri mirari; et erant quos uaria sors rerum lacrimaeque et misericordia subiret. [4] at non Vitellius flexit oculos nec tot milia insepultorum ciuium exhorruit: laetus ultro et tam propinquae sortis ignarus instaurabat sacrum dis loci.

> Then Vitellius turned to Cremona, and, after watching Caecina's gladiatorial show, desired to visit the fields of Bedriacum and survey with his eyes the traces of the recent victory. It was a foul and gloomy sight, nearly forty days after the battle: mangled bodies, severed limbs, the rotting shapes of men and horses, the ground contaminated by gore, in the worn down trees and crops terrible devastation. No less inhuman was the part of the road that the Cremonese had covered with laurel and roses. They had also erected altars and slaughtered victims, as though for a king—activities that, joyous for the moment, soon brought destruction on them. Valens and Caecina were there, and were pointing out locations on the battlefield: from here the column of legions had burst in, from here the cavalry had attacked, from there the bands of auxiliaries had prevailed. Now the tribunes and prefects, each extolling their own deeds, were mixing together falsehoods and truths or things greater than the truth. The common soldiers also turned from the road with shouts of joy, recognized the fields of battle, and stared, marveled at the piles of weapons, the heaps of bodies. And to some came thought of the varying lots in life, and tears, and pity. But Vitellius did not turn away his eyes or shudder at so many thousands of unburied citizens: he was actually joyous, and—so ignorant of his imminent lot—he instituted a sacrifice to the gods of the place.

The callousness of the civil-war victor Vitellius is disturbing, but Tacitus presents his response to the scene at Bedriacum in such a way as to make it seem familiar, repeated. The phrase he uses to capture the emperor's lust to survey his victims (*concupiuit* **lustrare oculis**) recalls the description of the triumphant Otho's joy at beholding Piso's severed head: *nullam caedem Otho maiore laetitia excepisse, nullum caput tam insatiabilibus* **oculis perlustrasse** *dicitur* (1.44.1: "Otho is said to have welcomed no murder with greater joy, and to have surveyed no head with eyes so insatiable").[62] Each conquering civil warrior pours his eyes over the conquered, as Otho's visual insatiability (*insatiabilibus oculis*) is matched by Vitellius' equally jarring lustfulness (note the emphatic *concupiuit*).[63] However, if we are reminded of that earlier moment, then we also note a conspicuous and regressive difference between the two victors' actions. Otho allows the burial of his victims (1.47.2, 1.49.1). His successor of course does not, and Tacitus in fact depicts a Vitellius who is enthralled specifically by the sight of "so many thousands of unburied citizens" (2.70.4).[64]

Like the grotesque and sustained leer that Vitellius gives in 2.70, the very act of marching through the corpses of the slaughtered is a regressive / escalating repetition of similar acts by his predecessors. Recall Tacitus' recollection of "Galba's slow and bloody march ... an entrance into the city that, with so many thousands of unarmed soldiers slaughtered, was unlucky in its omen and fearful even to the killers" (*tardum Galbae iter et cruentum ... introitus in urbem trucidatis tot milibus inermium militum infaustus omine*

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[62] These are the only two times when Tacitus construes a form of *lustro* with *oculis*. Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc. notes that this collocation also appears at Lucan, *BC* 7.795 (on which see below), Petronius, *Sat.* 11.1, Silius 2.405, and Statius, *Theb.* 1.482. Morgan (1992) 15 n. 7 notes the correspondence between *Hist.* 1.44.1 and 2.70.1, but is skeptical of an intratext. He compares Vitellius' line about his visual enjoyment of Iunius Blaesus' death, at 3.39.1: *quin et audita est saeuissima Vitelli uox, qua se* (*ipsa enim uerba referam*) *pauisse oculos spectata inimici morte iactauit.*

[63] Woodman (1979) 148 and Manolaraki (2005) 259 downplay the negative force of *concupiuit*. But, as Morgan (1992) 15 n. 7 notes, each of Tacitus' seven other uses of *concupisco* in the *Hist.* is in a negative context. He uses it most often of the lust for power shared by many of his characters (1.21.1, 1.52.2, 2.76.3, and 4.73.3); but also in the programmatic digression at 2.38, of the growing lust for wealth at Rome (2.38.2), and of Nero's craving for convenient minions, at 4.42.3. The use at 3.60.3 is ostensibly more neutral, as here Antonius Primus urges the Flavian troops to desire not to capture Rome but to save it (*ne concupiscerent Romam capere potius quam seruare*). But his words are pregnant with irony; in the event the troops lust much more for the former option than the latter, and an *urbs capta*, a battled down and pillaged Rome, is precisely what results from their entrance into the city (3.71–74.1).

[64] *Pace* Morgan (1992) 15 n. 7, who cites this meaningful difference as an argument against the relationship of these passages. I return to Otho's burial of his victims in Chapter 4.

atque ipsis etiam qui occiderant formidolosus, 1.6.1–2); and also the victorious Otho's procession "through the still bloody forum, through the piles of the dead" (*cruento adhuc foro per stragem iacentium*, 1.47.2).[65] Vitellius' chapter-long visit to the fields of Bedriacum repeats and emphatically outdoes the already disturbing victory-marches by Galba and Otho. And if these earlier processions were ominous for the emperors' reigns, the escalating repetition of them in 2.70 surely bodes poorly for Vitellius too.[66]

These intratextual links in a sense ensnare Vitellius, who emerges doomed to repeat the atrocities—and the failures—of Galba and Otho. Tacitus also inserts into the passage explicit assurances that more death is soon to follow. He concludes the chapter by characterizing Vitellius, making a sacrifice to the gods at Bedriacum, as *propinquae sortis ignarus* (2.70.4). The phrase and the context recall the description of Galba at 1.29.1, where he too is sacrificing to the gods, and utterly ignorant (*ignarus*, the opening word of 1.29) of his own imminent doom.[67] The fate at Cremona II of the local townspeople, supporters of the Vitellians at Cremona I, is also chillingly foretold when a description of their celebratory activities is given the appendage: *quae laeta in praesens mox perniciem ipsis fecere* (2.70.2). Their short-lived cheeriness (*laeta in praesens*) is in fact linked with Vitellius' when Tacitus describes the blissfully clueless emperor with this same adjective (*laetus*) at 2.70.4. What these characters do not see—but Tacitus invites the reader to observe in close-up here in 2.70—is that the defeat and horrors of Cremona I will soon be repeated, its land again befouled (*infecta tabo humus* at 2.70.1 looks ahead to *noxia tabo humus* at 3.35.1),[68] with the winners so soon becoming losers.

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65 In Chapter 1 I address the ways in which 1.6.2 foreshadows Galba's murder. And the bloody forum of 1.47.2 is repeated in 4.1.1, as I discuss in the Epilogue.

66 Heubner (1963–1982) 219 (in the Vorbemerkung to 2.56–73) discusses these similarities, with reference to the dissertations by Burkart (1945) and Allgeier (1957), which I have not seen.

67 Ash (2007a) ad loc. notes this parallel. The full line at 1.29.1 reads: *ignarus interim Galba et sacris intentus fatigabat alieni iam imperii deos*. Galba's ignorance is of Otho's plans for a coup, which are described in the preceding chapters. The language here in 2.70 also looks ahead to Vitellius' death-scene. Keitel (1992) 349–350 discusses how the *foedum spectaculum* of 2.70 anticipates the *foedum spectaculum* (3.84.5) of Vitellius' defeat and death at *Hist.* 3.83–85. Then too there will be happy onlookers (*malis publicis* **laeti**, 3.83.3), whose *inhumana securitas* (3.83.3) recalls how inhuman the sights at Cremona were (2.70.2). Keitel (350) notes that these are Tacitus' only two uses of *inhumanus*. Vitellius' failure to shudder here (*nec ... exhorruit*, 2.70.4) may look ironically ahead to his shuddering on his death day (*inhorrescit*, 3.84.4).

68 Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc. and Ash (2007a) ad loc. note the correspondence. Funari (1989) 591–592 collects the many passages from other authors with comparable phrasing and imagery.

Here in this pivotal, backward- and forward-looking passage is, again, the influence of Virgil and Lucan. Now, as readers of 2.70 have discussed, postbellum tours of the battlefield are conventional in Latin literature. We see that them at, for example, Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae* 61, Livy, 22.51.5–9, Statius, *Thebaid* 12.22–37, Silius Italicus, 6.1–13, and another from Tacitus at *Annals* 1.61–62.[69] But the historian has clustered into 2.70 pointed allusions to Virgil and Lucan, which, I think, serve specifically to strengthen the passage's sense of imminent repetition and doom.

Firstly, the language that Tacitus uses to describe Vitellius' visual response to the gore at Bedriacum recalls in a few precise ways the triumphant Caesar that Lucan depicts walking the fields of Pharsalus at *Bellum Civile* 7.787–824, the most elaborate—and probably most disturbing—of Latin literature's battlefield visits. Tacitus marks the activation of Lucan's passage in 2.70's opening sentence. The emperor's lust to survey the carnage with his eyes (**lustrare oculis** *concupiuit*, 2.70.1) brings to mind Otho, as we have seen, but also Lucan's still bloodthirsty Caesar, for whom "it is a delight to *not* see the soil of Emathia, and to survey with his eyes plains hiding under carnage" (*iuuat Emathiam non cernere terram* | *et* **lustrare oculis** *campos sub clade latentes*, 7.794–795).[70] Caesar's particular pleasure lies in the fact that the corpses remain above the ground, and so cover it—a macabre inversion of a burial. As I discussed above, this same fact captivates Vitellius as well. And the litotes with which Tacitus emphasizes Vitellius' enjoyment of the scene (*at non Vitellius flexit oculos nec tot milia insepultorum ciuium exhorruit*, 2.70.4) reminds us of Lucan's similar wording at the beginning of his passage: *nulla loci facies reuocat ferialibus aruis* | *haerentes oculos* (7.788–789: "No feature of the place turns away Caesar's eyes, which are glued to the fatal fields").[71] Finally, the simple, chilling *laetus* with which Tacitus

[69] Woodman (1979) 147 suggests that the *topos* may go back to a lost passage in Ennius. He also proposes (147–149) that *Ann.* 1.61–62 is not just another case of the *topos*, but that there Tacitus has borrowed details specifically from his earlier passage *Hist.* 2.70. Opposing this suggestion, and preferring to read each passage as an instance of the *topos*, are Morgan (1992) 22–26 and Perutelli (2004) 100–107. See also Pagán (2000) 425–434 on the *topos* of the "aftermath narrative" as a device that "affords an author the opportunity to explore the intertwining nexus of past, present, and future" (425).

[70] On this correspondence Manolaraki (2005) 259 states: "Tacitus' claim is not the same as Lucan's. His point is that Vitellius desired (*concupiuit*) to survey the grounds before his arrival on location, not that he actively enjoyed the aftermath, as Caesar did." As I discuss in note 63 above, such an argument misreads the force of *concupiuit*. What is more, by placing this allusion to Lucan's Caesar right at the outset of the passage, as Vitellius arrives at Bedriacum, Tacitus puts the image of that savage character in the reader's mind right away.

[71] Manolaraki (2005) 258 argues that Tacitus' use of negatives in this sentence has a

modifies the emperor in the passage's last sentence is used in a like way of Caesar's visual delights at *BC* 7.797.[72]

These are the most meaningful verbal similarities between Caesar at Lucan's Pharsalus and Vitellius at Tacitus' Bedriacum. Another significant, and as yet unnoticed, quality unites the two passages: the element of ironic foreboding. Immediately before his account of the feral Caesar's walk through the battlefield, Lucan recounts the man's dreams from the previous night, of avenging citizens, and in particular of avengers in the senate (7.776–783). This anticipation of Caesar's assassination is a central, essential part of Lucan's narrative of Pharsalus. The horrors of civil war would be repaid to Caesar, with appropriate gore, on that "avenging day" (*ultrix … dies*, 7.782).[73] If Tacitus in his picture of Vitellius at Bedriacum is recalling Lucan's Caesar, he does so, I suggest, to invoke not just Caesar's savagery, but also the vengeance that necessarily results from that savagery. Our awareness of Vitellius' "imminent lot" (*propinquae sortis*, 2.70.4) is sharpened, made more precise and visual, by the recollection of Caesar's doomed walk around Pharsalus.

The allusions in 2.70 to post-war "revisitation scenes" in the *Aeneid* operate in a similar though, I think, more generally proleptic way. Here I will consider a verbal allusion to Virgil, and then a particular narrative strategy of the poet's that Tacitus appears to employ. The former comes in the description of the emotions that struck some of the common soldiers on that day: *et erant quos uaria sors rerum lacrimaeque et misericordia subiret* (2.70.3). Unlike their shortsighted leader and the celebratory Cremonese, these troops are aware of the mutability of experience (*uaria sors rerum*, 2.70.3). This realization itself anticipates the repetition / reversal of Cremona I at Cremona II. And it is given greater poignancy by the reference to *Aeneid* 1.462 that Tacitus delicately weaves into the phrase through

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mitigating effect: "Tacitus says that he was not appalled enough to avert his gaze, thus stating what he did not do, rather than what he actually did (*non flexit … oculos, non exhorruit*). The man is depicted as unbelievably callous, but he never appears to crave, or delight in, the gruesome spectacle." But surely the litotes here emphasizes Vitellius' captivation by the scene, which he, like Lucan's Caesar, craved (*concupiuit*) to behold. See Ash (2007a) on 2.2.1 on the similar litotes there (*neque abhorrebat a Berenice*).

72 *BC* 7.797: *ac ne* **laeta** *furens scelerum spectacula perdat, | inuidet igne rogi miseris.* Lauletta (1998) 302–303 discusses this correspondence.

73 The full sentence reads, at 7.781–783: *hunc omnes gladii, quos aut Pharsalia uidit | aut ultrix uisura dies stringente senatu, | illa nocte premunt, hunc infera monstra flagellant.* Earlier at 7.586–596 Lucan addresses Brutus on the battlefield at Pharsalus and in a like way anticipates Caesar's fall to the senators' daggers. See Ahl (1976) 318 on further references to Caesar's assassination in the *BC*.

the inclusion of the juxtaposition *rerum lacrimaeque*. As Manolaraki notes, these are the only two places where these words are juxtaposed.[74] In *Aeneid* 1 the collocation appears during Aeneas' tearful words to Achates, as the two observe the scenes from the Trojan War that adorn Juno's temple in Carthage. At 1.461–462 Aeneas states: *sunt hic etiam sua praemia laudi, | sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt* ("Here too there are due rewards for glory, here too there are tears for human experience and mortal affairs touch the mind"). Interpreting the artist's depiction of Trojan suffering as sympathetic, Aeneas feels consolation from his Carthaginian hosts-to-be.

This commiseration between artist and viewer at *Aeneid* 1.461–462 is, on the plainest level, over events from the past. However, the lamentable horrors at Troy depicted in lavish detail in the ensuing lines (1.466–493) will be repeated in the *Aeneid*'s second half. In that sense, this review of past suffering on Juno's temple is also a *preview* of the additional, repeated suffering—and the repeated *lacrimae rerum*—to come.[75] Because all of this will happen again, Virgil's phrase *sunt lacrimae rerum*, which he already endows with an infinitely general sense through his use of the word *res*, takes on an even greater and more open generality. Tacitus' incorporation of Virgil's evocative phrase into his own comparable phrase at 2.70.3 directs us back to Aeneas' and Achates' review / preview of the tearful travesties of war, and so broadens further the backward- and forward-looking scope of 2.70, inviting us to read the chapter as a meditation on the lamentable continuities in Roman suffering generally, from the wars of the *Aeneid* all the way up to the Cremonas, and beyond.

Just earlier in 2.70 Tacitus may recall Virgil's manner in another reflective post-battle scene in the *Aeneid*, and to similar effect. The way in which Valens and Caecina re-imagine the events of Cremona I (*hinc inrupisse legionum agmen, hinc equites coortos, inde circumfusas auxiliorum manus*, 2.70.3) is very similar to what the Trojans do at *Aeneid* 2.27–30. In this passage Aeneas describes to his Carthaginian audience the trip he and his countrymen made to the Trojan plains, under the assumption that the Greeks had left and the war was over:

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[74] Manolaraki (2005) 254, who also compares Tacitus' use of *mirantur* to describe the troops' reaction to Bedriacum with *miratur* at *Aen.* 1.456, of Aeneas' reaction to the frieze.

[75] See Putnam (1998) 45–46 on the *ekphrasis* of Juno's temple as a means of foreshadowing the events of Books 7–12. And see my discussions in the Introduction of the repetitions in the Trojan and Latin Wars (with further bibliography).

iuuat ire et Dorica castra
desertosque uidere locos litusque relictum.
hic Dolopum manus, hic saeuus tendebat Achilles,
classibus hic locus, hic acie certare solebant.

It was pleasing to go and see the Doric camp, the deserted locations, and the abandoned shore. Here a band of Dolopians had camped, here savage Achilles. Here was the spot for their fleet, here they used to strive in battle.

In the very next line, the Trojans come upon "the destructive gift of unwed Minerva" (*innuptae donum exitiale Mineruae*, 2.31), the Trojan horse, which they ultimately admit into the city (2.234–240). The horrors of war are then resumed, this time leading to the destruction of Troy. In light of all that follows in Book 2, then, the visit at 2.27–30, which was described as a joy (*iuuat*), in fact takes on a decidedly ominous character. All that the Trojans pointed out with a measure of victorious nostalgia—the Doric camp, the Greek fleet, the band of Dolopians, savage Achilles—returns in full, lethal force, most conspicuously in the person of Neoptolemus, leader of the Dolopian troop and son / reincarnation of Achilles.[76] Furthermore, this war, as we have seen, will be repeated again in the *Aeneid*. The war of the poem's second half, the Sibyl warns Aeneas in Book 6, will have its own Doric camps (the phrase *Dorica castra* is repeated at 6.88), and another Achilles (*alius … Achilles*, 6.89).[77]

The visit to the Trojan plain that Aeneas recalls at 2.27–30, then, is a look back, but more significantly a look *forward*, to the resumed (Trojan) and then repetitive (Latin) wars that are to come in the text. This, I suggest, is precisely Tacitus' method in 2.70.3. Each of the three events from Cremona I that the Vitellian generals nostalgically point out (*hinc inrupisse legionum agmen, hinc equites coortos, inde circumfusas auxiliorum manus*) will be repeated during the conflicts of Cremona II, but now with disastrous results for the Vitellians. The breakthrough by the legions at Cremona I that they recall (*hinc* **inrupisse legionum agmen**) in fact suffers a pointed reversal: in the early stages of Cremona II the Vitellian legions are themselves broken by a mixed force of Flavian infantry and cavalry, an encounter Tacitus describes with mirroring language: *mixtus pedes equesque* **rupere**

76 We are reminded of the particular imagery at 2.27–30 when at 2.461–462 Aeneas describes in short the breadth of his view from the roof of Priam's palace: *unde omnis Troia uideri | et* **Danaum solitae naues** *et* **Achaica castra.**

77 I print the full lines in note 40 above. The role of *alius Achilles* is taken up as much by Aeneas himself as by Turnus (Quint (1993) 65–79; Thomas (1998) 278–283).

legionum agmen (3.18.2: "The mixed infantry and cavalry burst through the column of legions"). The success of auxiliary troops remembered here (*inde circumfusas auxiliorum manus*) will also be reversed at Cremona II. For the Batavian auxiliaries who were of such importance for the Vitellians at Cremona I (2.43.2) have been sent north by the time of Cremona II. In this second war it is the Flavian auxiliaries that are more organized[78] and go on to play a significant role in Antonius Primus' attack of the Vitellian camp (3.29.1). Finally, Valens' and Caecina's recollection of their cavalry's attack at Cremona I (*hinc equites coortos*) is an astounding stretch of the truth; the Vitellian cavalry failed miserably there (2.41.2).[79] The phrase in fact describes much more accurately the successes of the *Flavian* cavalry against the Vitellians early on at Cremona II, which Tacitus highlights in 3.16 and 3.18.2.

Valens' and Caecina's review of events at Cremona I, then, reads at the same time as a spot-on preview of episodes at Cremona II, but with the roles of winner and loser reversed. As we have seen over the course of this chapter, this repetition—an unproductive and thus degenerative one—comes to define the Cremonas, and it is captured neatly by the medially placed snapshot here in 2.70. Tacitus' method in this chapter of review / preview, we have seen, is comparable with that of Virgil in the richly proleptic passage at *Aeneid* 2.27–30. Is Tacitus directly recalling Virgil's eminently memorable passage?[80] If so, then the effect is complementary to the sense that the remembrance of Virgil's *lacrimae rerum* brings: an impression of the inevitability of repetition, and of wars re-fought, of attacks, horrors, deaths, and lamentation suffered again. At the same time the recollection in 2.70 of the repeated Troy of the *Aeneid* prepares us for the extended engagement with Virgil's repetitive wars that is to come at Cremona II.

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[78] Contrast the description of the Flavians' alignment at 3.21.2 (*cohortes auxiliorum in cornibus*) with that of their leaderless Vitellian equivalents at 3.22.2 (*eques auxiliaque sibi ipsi locum legere*).

[79] As Manolaraki (2005) 250 notes.

[80] Perutelli (2004) 106 also notes the comparably rich sense of irony that imbues each passage. Woodman (1979) 147 has compared the authors' use of demonstrative adverbs in the two passages: Tacitus' *hinc*, *hinc*, and *inde* guide the viewer and reader in the same way that Virgil's repeated use of *hic* in 2.29–30 does. He also compares Tacitus' use of *hic* and *illic* at *Ann.* 1.61.4, on which see note 69 above. See too Statius' similar use of demonstratives in his postwar battlefield visit at *Theb.* 12.24.

The appeal of *Aen.* 2.27–30 (a scene that Perutelli (2004) 102, comparing it with Statius, *Theb.* 12.22–37, calls "celebre") may be demonstrated by Lucan's reference to it at *BC* 7.794–795. His *iuuat … non cernere* seems to be a clear inversion of Virgil's *iuuat ire et … | uidere* at *Aen.* 2.27–28.

CHAPTER FOUR

OTHO'S EXEMPLARY RESPONSE

There is an outlier to the *Histories*' rhythm of regressive repetition. Tacitus' Otho, the revolutionary who rises up to overthrow Galba in *Histories* 1, is no untarnished hero. But in the rich account of the emperor's suicide at *Histories* 2.46–49, Tacitus presents Otho as a corrective respondent to the repetitive civil wars of the surrounding narrative, as the one voice opposing the trope of repetition's hold on the *Histories*. And, as we shall see later in this short concluding chapter, in Otho's death-scene Tacitus again employs a cluster of epic allusions in order to underline his point.

In Chapter 3 I considered the programmatic force of Tacitus' words at 2.46.3, which come just after the Othonians' loss at Cremona I: *nemo dubitet potuisse renouari bellum atrox lugubre incertum uictis et uictoribus* ("No one would doubt that the war could have been renewed—gloomy, lamentable, and uncertain for the vanquished and the victors alike"). This line, which prepares us for the "rematch" at Cremona II, caps off a chapter (2.46) in which Otho's soldiers and his praetorian prefect Plotius Firmus vehemently urge him to press on and continue the war against Vitellius. But Otho resolutely refuses. Prior to their pleas, in fact, Tacitus had already informed us of the emperor's constancy and resolve in his plan of action: *opperiebatur Otho nuntium pugnae nequaquam trepidus et consilii certus* (2.46.1: "Otho awaited news of the battle not at all afraid and certain of a plan").

We learn of that plan in 2.47, where Tacitus crafts for Otho a point-by-point rebuttal to his supporters' demands to renew the war.[1] So, the troops bid the emperor to be of good spirit (*bonum haberet animum iubebant*, 2.46.1), and Plotius tells him that the greater spirit endures adversity rather than fleeing it (*maiore animo tolerari aduersa quam relinqui*, 2.46.2). Otho redirects the focus to *their* spirits, by saying that the endangerment of their spirit and courage (*hunc … animum, hanc uirtutem uestram*, 2.47.1)[2] is too

[1] As Keitel (1987) 77–78 discusses. And as she notes, the motifs addressed here are missing from Otho's speech at Plutarch, *Otho* 15.3–6, where there is also no equivalent to Plotius' speech.

[2] The full sentence, the first of Otho's speech, reads: *'hunc' inquit 'animum, hanc uirtutem uestram ultra periculis obicere nimis grande uitae meae pretium puto'* (2.47.1).

great a price to pay for his life. He then wills their spirit for battle to die with him, while they themselves survive: *eat hic mecum animus, tamquam perituri pro me fueritis, sed este superstites* (2.47.3—"May this spirit of yours die with me, just as if you were about to die for my sake—but live on as survivors"). In addition, while Plotius encourages the defeated emperor not to avoid (*relinqui*, 2.46.2) adversity, Otho asserts that relinquishing his office is precisely the right thing to do: *alii diutius imperium tenuerint: nemo tam fortiter* **reliquerit** (2.47.2: "Others may have held power for more time; no one will have put it down so bravely"). Plotius also tells Otho that the brave and the energetic stick to their hopes, even against fortune (*fortes et strenuos etiam contra* **fortunam** *insistere* **spei**, 2.46.2). To this assertion as well Otho responds directly and assuredly: *quanto plus* **spei** *ostenditis, si uiuere placeret, tanto pulchrior mors erit. experti in uicem sumus ego ac* **fortuna** (2.47.1: "The more hope you show for me, if I were to choose to live, the more noble will my death be. Fortune and I have had our turn with each other"). Furthermore, in response to the soldiers' vow to face the finality of death for his sake (*ipsos* **extrema** *passuros ausurosque*, 2.46.1), and Plotius' charge of cowardice (*timidos et* **ignauos** *ad desperationem formidine properare*, 2.46.2), Otho authoritatively rebuts: *plura de* **extremis** *loqui pars* **ignauiae** *est* (2.47.3—"To say a lot about the finality of death is a marker of cowardice").

Otho refuses to reengage, and to subject these armies to more bloodshed. And with a few of his statements Tacitus appears to fashion an Otho acutely, even metatextually, aware of the repetitive dynamics of the wars that surround him in the *Histories*. His supporters' will to renew the conflict is clear: note again Tacitus' judgment at 2.46.3 (*nemo dubitet potuisse* **renouari** *bellum*), as well the troops' highlighting of fresh, new forces (*superesse adhuc* **nouas** *uires*) at 2.46.1. Otho's stance is sharply opposed to this (2.47.2):

> ciuile bellum a Vitellio coepit, et ut de principatu certaremus armis, initium illic fuit: ne plus quam semel certemus, penes me exemplum erit; hinc Othonem posteritas aestimet.
>
> The civil war began with Vitellius, and with him was the start of our armed fight for the principate. To fight no more than once—this will be my example. From this act let posterity judge Otho.

There is more than a little disingenuousness in Otho's first claim here. At *Histories* 2.31.1 Tacitus states that "no one was charging [Vitellius] with starting the war" (*illi initium belli nemo imputabat*). Indeed, Vitellius had revolted from Galba and been declared emperor at the year's beginning,

some two weeks before Otho's coup.[3] And the coup itself undermines any of Otho's finger-pointing for the discord of this year. However, in his next statement Otho offers a corrective to the repetitiveness of these wars: *ne plus quam semel certemus. Once is enough. This war need not be fought again.* With the explicit casting of himself as an *exemplum*,[4] along with reference to himself in the third person in the next line, Otho appears to hold himself out to the rest of the text—the internal audience that follows (*post-eritas*) in the text—as a model of ceasing, relenting, not repeating.[5] Correspondingly, Otho's assertion that he "has no need for vengeance" on Vitellius (2.47.2: *mihi non ultione ... opus est*) reads likes an effort to put an end to the cycle of vengeance introduced so emphatically at Galba's death scene.[6] And shortly afterwards in Otho's speech, Tacitus has the emperor once more hold up his role as one who refuses to let Rome fight herself again: *an ego tantum Romanae pubis, tot egregios exercitus sterni rursus et rei publicae eripi patiar?* (2.47.3: "Should I allow such a great part of our Roman youth, so many distinguished armies, to be laid low *again* and ripped from the state?").[7]

So Otho, after formally discharging his troops (2.48.1) and consoling his nephew Salvius Cocceianus with another speech (2.48.2), has a restful night's sleep and then falls on his sword (2.49.1–2).[8] In the short obituary at 2.50.1, Tacitus, while making due mention of the bloody coup of Galba that Otho executed, validates the aspirations for an exemplary death that Otho himself voiced at 2.47.2:

> duobus facinoribus, altero flagitiosissimo, altero egregio, tantundem apud posteros meruit bonae famae quantum malae.

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3 As Ash (2007a) ad loc. notes and discusses.

4 Ash (2007a) ad loc. contrasts Otho's self-fashioning here with his citing of past *exempla* at Plutarch, *Otho* 15.4–8 and Dio, 64.13.2–3: "where the parallel tradition has Otho speak in terms of specific *exempla* from the past, T.'s Otho boldly visualises himself as an *exemplum* for the future."

5 For a similar and sustained approach to exemplary discourse within a text, see the study of exemplarity in Livy by Chaplin (2000), who sets out to "radically expand our view of [Livy's] *exempla* to include the activity of learning from the past as demonstrated within his narrative" (4). As such she productively defines an *exemplum* as "anything from the past that serves as a guide to conduct within the text" (3). Roller (2004) 4–6 (also at (2009) 216–217) offers a thoughtful, if more restrictive, rubric for what constitutes exemplary discourse. See also note 79 in Chapter 1 on O'Gorman (2000), a sustained study of reading by characters in the *Ann.*

6 See my discussion in Chapter 2 of 1.40.2 and 1.44.2.

7 Edwards (2012) 248–253 reads Otho's self-sacrifice, like Galba's, as a *devotio*.

8 On the constancy with which Tacitus' Otho kills himself (to be contrasted with e.g. Nero's inability to take his own life, Suetonius, *Nero* 49.2), see Ash (1999) 88–89.

> With two deeds, one the most disgraceful, the other most distinguished, he earned as much of a good reputation with posterity as a bad one.

Otho's *facinus egregium*, his suicide that stayed the resumption of civil war, indeed earned him great distinction. At *Histories* 2.31.1 Tacitus writes of the "distinguished fame" (*egregiam famam*) that the emperor acquired posthumously.[9] His death thus satisfies the promise of exemplary (and exciting) death-scenes that Tacitus makes to the reader in his table of contents: *non tamen adeo uirtutum sterile saeculum, ut non et bona exempla prodiderit*: ... *supremae clarorum uirorum necessitates, ipsa necessitas fortiter tolerata et laudatis antiquorum mortibus pares exitus* (1.3.1—"Nevertheless, the age was not so barren of virtues that it did not also produce good examples, [including] ... the last moments of distinguished men, finality itself being endured bravely, and deaths equal to the laudable deaths of old").

In ullum rei publicae usum

Otho's death is exemplary to Tacitus because of its utility. On the matter of why Tacitus fashioned such a lengthy account of Otho's final moments, Syme wrote:

> What draws Tacitus is manifest. Not merely the opportunity to portray a theatrical suicide, such as the taste of the Romans took delight in, but a suicide more truly to be commended than when a good man took his own life in ostentatious rectitude, but with no advantage to the Commonwealth. Otho's resolution averted any further shedding of Roman blood in civil war.[10]

Syme integrates a Tacitean maxim into his assessment of Otho's special value to Tacitus. At *Agricola* 42.4, when writing of his father-in-law's unostentatious submission to Domitian, Tacitus famously declares that "it is possible for great men to live even under bad emperors" (*posse etiam sub malis principibus magnos uiros esse*). He goes on to assert that men of duty and hard work such as Agricola can achieve just as much glory as the many men who "have become famous with their ostentatious deaths, but with no ben-

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[9] See too Martial's words at 6.32.5–6: *sit Cato, dum uiuit, sane uel Caesare maior*: | *dum moritur, numquid maior Othone fuit?* Ash (1999) 85 discusses the Catonian elements in Otho's suicide.

[10] Syme (1958) 205. On Otho's death as a model death by Tacitean standards, see also Harris (1962) esp. 74–75. In their treatments of the Tacitean Otho, Shochat (1981) and Perkins (1993) maintain that Tacitus is unfairly harsh towards him, even in his death-scene (a claim that I find hard to substantiate).

efit to the state" (*in nullum rei publicae usum ambitiosa morte inclaruerunt*).[11] Implied here is criticism of outspoken opponents of the principate whose deaths were celebrated,[12] but whose lives did not benefit the state as Agricola's did. Though his life had little in common with Agricola's, Otho's death, in Tacitus' view, shared one important quality with the life of Agricola: utility to the state. Both men provide Tacitus, and in turn his readers, with valuable *exempla*. It is no surprise, then, that in his final assessment of each man Tacitus emphasizes that man's fame among posterity. The concluding words of the *Agricola* are *Agricola posteritati narratus et traditus superstes erit* (46.4: "Agricola's story has been told and handed down to posterity, and he will survive").[13] In the judgment at *Histories* 2.50.1 that I have printed above, the historian likewise affirms the fame *apud posteros* to which Otho aspired at 2.47.2 (*hinc Othonem posteritas aestimet*), and even earlier, in his opening monologue, at 1.21.2: *mortem omnibus ex natura aequalem obliuione apud posteros uel gloria distingui* ("Death, which nature grants to all equally, has the distinction in posterity of either being forgotten or attaining glory").

And, though word of Otho's *exemplum* gets out,[14] posterity in the text—the internal, textual audience—certainly does not listen. While some of his men follow Otho by taking their own lives too (2.49.4), the code of relenting does not prevail in the subsequent narrative of the *Histories*. Cremona II will of course repeat, and outdo, the horrors of Cremona I. And the cataclysmic Fall of Rome is soon to follow after that.

One character in what follows whom Tacitus makes to look conspicuously incapable of learning from Otho's *exemplum* is his successor Vitellius. After his loss to the Flavian forces at Cremona II, Vitellius faces a very similar situation to Otho's after Cremona I. And, at first, he takes relenting steps that mirror Otho's. With the Flavian army approaching Rome, Vitellius draws up a peace agreement with Vespasian's brother Flavius Sabinus (3.65.2). In 3.68 he exits the Capitol, and in a speech of abdication states that "he is surrendering himself for the sake of peace, and for the state; and

11 The full sentence at *Agr.* 42.4 reads: *Sciant, quibus moris est inlicita mirari, posse etiam sub malis principibus magnos uiros esse, obsequiumque ac modestiam, si industria ac uigor adsint, eo laudis excedere, quo plerique per abrupta, sed in nullum rei publicae usum ambitiosa morte inclaruerunt.*

12 In e.g. the *exitus illustrium uirorum* composed by Titinius Capito, on whom see Pliny, *Ep.* 8.12 and Syme (1958) 92–93.

13 Corresponding with the work's opening words, at 1.1: *clarorum uirorum facta moresque* **posteris** *tradere.*

14 See *Hist.* 2.53.2, where one of the emperor's freedmen reports to the senators gathered in Bononia that at his death Otho's "only concern was for posterity" (*sola posteritatis cura*).

that they should hold onto only his memory" (*cedere se pacis et rei publicae causa, retinerent tantum memoriam sui*, 3.68.2). Otho and his *exemplum* are not named, but with this quote Tacitus appears to remind the reader of Otho's words of self-sacrifice, profession of concern for the *res publica*, and view to the future at 2.47.2–3. But there is a stark difference: Vitellius does not go through with his abdication. After this speech, the emperor's resolve crumbles, as the shouts of the crowd lure him back into the Palace and the seat of power (3.68.3). A particular contrasting detail in the abdications of Otho and Vitellius comes in their respective uses of the *pugio*, the dagger that symbolized the emperor's power over life and death. Otho kills himself with this weapon (2.49.2), whereas Vitellius' ostentatious surrender of the dagger is refused by the consul Caecilius Simplex (3.68.2), and the acquiescent emperor returns to the Palace (3.68.3). Another verbal detail that underscores Vitellius' pointed "drop-off" from Otho's *exemplum* is the description of him as *consilii inops* (3.68.3), to be contrasted with the phrase *consilii certus* that Tacitus uses of the resolute Otho at 2.46.1.

After the failed abdication, Vitellius writes a letter to Sabinus, who is being besieged on the Capitol, and admits that he no longer has any control over his armies (3.70.4). So the Vitellian troops go through with their attack on the Capitol (3.71); and the civil war escalates to its—or, as Tacitus saw it, Roman history's (3.72.1)—most disgraceful event. Vitellius' failure to successfully follow Otho's example, his inability to fight "no more than once" (*ne plus quam semel*), leads to nothing less than the destruction of the Capitol.[15] Moreover, the Vitellian forces will be routed in their final fight at Rome (3.82–84.3), and the emperor himself, unlike Otho, will die an ignominious and valueless death (3.84.4–85). Put another way, Vitellius' inability to repeat Otho's rejection of the *Histories*' repetitiveness speaks to the potency of that repetitiveness, in these wars and in this work. This failed exemplary exchange from one emperor to the next within the text is representative: the dying Otho's message of relenting, of "once is enough," while celebrated and given a prominent voice in 2.46–49, is, we see, utterly outmatched by the much larger cast of repeating, unlearning, un-progressive characters.

[15] Suetonius (*Vit.* 15.3–4) has many of the same details as Tacitus, but places Vitellius' failed abdication after the burning of the Capitol. Dio (65.16.3–6) presents Vitellius' hemming and hawing about his office as an ongoing affair, with several disingenuous abdications (65.16.6), all of which he describes before his narration of the taking of the Capitol (65.17.2–3).

Otho the Anti-Aeneas?

I have observed in this study how Tacitus employs clusters of Virgilian allusions in the climactic events in his repetitive wars. The same "clustering" method is on display in *Histories* 2.46–49, Otho's response to that repetitiveness.

The first of these is placed, significantly, in the final words of Otho's speech to his supporters. At 2.47.3 the resolved emperor declares:

> praecipuum destinationis meae documentum habete quod de nemine queror; nam **incusare deos uel homines** eius est qui uiuere uelit.
>
> Take as the best demonstration of my determination that I complain about no one; for to blame gods or men is the act of one who wants to live.

As readers of this passage have observed,[16] Otho's words *incusare deos uel homines* recall the words of Aeneas at *Aeneid* 2.745. There Aeneas remembers his reaction upon realizing that he had left behind his wife Creusa: *quem non* **incusaui amens hominumque deorumque**? ("Whom of men and gods did I not blame in my madness?"). The defeated Aeneas, forced to abandon Troy and, he realizes, his wife, reacts by going mad (*amens*) and faulting others, men and gods alike, for his losses. Otho finds himself in a similar situation after Cremona I: he too has just been defeated and is left at a low point by the defeat. But the temperate, resolved Otho whom we have examined here of course reacts in just the opposite way. He *refuses* to succumb to madness, in spite of the maddened goads of his supporters, who "were burning with a certain impulsive madness to stir up the fortune of the party" (*excitare partium fortunam furore quodam et instinctu flagrabant*, 2.46.1). And, while in his speech Otho does fault Vitellius for initiating their war (recall 2.47.2: *ciuile bellum a Vitellio coepit*), he pointedly refuses to "blame gods or men" for his loss and his lot. By means of this direct quotation of Aeneas—a direct rejection of Aeneas' response to loss—Otho appears to define himself as a different kind of hero from Virgil's hero, as an anti-Aeneas.

To push this reading a bit further, Tacitus may also be constructing an Otho who responds to the whole epic program of the *Histories*. Let us recall that just a few chapters earlier, in the work's crucial proem in the middle,

[16] Heubner (1963–1982) and Ash (2007a) ad loc., as well as Austin (1964) on *Aen.* 2.745. Of the examples listed for *incuso homines uel deos* at *TLL* 7.1099.11 ff., only at *Aen.* 2.745 and *H.* 2.47.3 does *incuso* take as its objects both men and gods. Livy uses *accuso* with these objects at 5.43.7, 28.7.8, and 30.20.7.

the narrator himself blames "the same anger of the gods, the same madness of humans" (*eadem ... deum ira, eadem hominum rabies*, 2.38.2) for driving the civil war of his narrative, in a gesture that mirrors and perpetuates the impassioned outbursts of Virgil and Lucan.[17] With his emphatically placed refusal to do precisely such blaming, is Otho at 2.47.3 confronting not just Aeneas—the representative hero of epic—but also the most important participant in the *Histories*' repetitive, epic civil wars, Tacitus himself? Is the dying Otho whom Tacitus crafts more than just a respondent to the repetitiveness that surrounds him (as I suggested in the previous section), but also a respondent to the work's narrator, the one whose recounting of these civil wars is itself a repetitive act?

The depiction of Otho as an anti-Aeneas may be developed further shortly afterwards in his death-scene. Following the account in 2.48 of the emperor's final instructions to his supporters and consolation of his nephew, Tacitus writes, at 2.49.1: *atque illum* **supremas iam curas animo uolutantem** *repens tumultus auertit, nuntiata consternatione ac licentia militum* ("Then, as he was rolling over in his heart his last cares, a sudden commotion distracted him, when he learned of the mutiny and outrageous behavior of his soldiers"). The image of someone rolling over concerns in his heart is not extraordinary in Latin literature.[18] But Ash may be on to something when she compares the description here of the contemplative Otho with the one of Aeneas at *Aeneid* 6.157–158, just after he receives instructions from the Sibyl: *caecosque uolutat* | *euentus animo secum* ("And he rolls over these dark issues with himself, in his heart").[19] This pensive, self-reflective Aeneas is one we see often in the poem: just afterwards in Book 6, we again encounter him deep in gloomy reflection (6.185: *haec ipse suo tristi cum corde uolutat*—"He was rolling over these things in his sad heart"); as he is returning to the Latin battlefield at 10.159–160, Virgil paints the same image as we saw at 6.157–158 (*Aeneas secumque uolutat* | *euentus belli uarios*); and at 4.285–286, during the throes of the Carthaginian episode, and again at 8.20–21, as the war in Latium heats up, we read: *atque animum nunc huc celerem nunc diuidit illuc* | *in partisque rapit uarias perque omnia uersat* ("And he directs his racing heart now here, now there; and he steers it into many directions and runs it over everything"). Pensiveness, or

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[17] See my discussion of this passage in Chapter 1.

[18] As the note with comparable passages by Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc. shows.

[19] Ash (2007a) ad loc. Draeger (1882) 113 states that Tacitus' use of *uoluo* in a simlar way (= *mente agitare*) at e.g. *Hist.* 1.64.1 and *Ann.* 1.64.4 is derived from Virgil.

deliberativeness, or the internal "rolling over of concerns," is, we see, a lasting and defining characteristic of Virgil's hero.[20]

So, when at *Histories* 2.49.1 Tacitus describes Otho as *supremas iam curas animo uolutantem*, we are reminded for a moment of the tortured, "scatter-hearted" Aeneas whom Virgil depicts so often. But if Tacitus is indeed pointing us to the deliberative Roman hero *par excellence*, then I would suggest that he does so, again, to mark a contrast between Otho and Aeneas. In the emperor's death-scene, as we have seen, and in the episode that immediately follows the allusion in 2.49.1, Otho is in fact decidedly *un*-deliberative, *un*-hesitant, and *un*-Aeneas-like. His response to the "mutiny and outrageous behavior of his soldiers" (*consternatione ac licentia militum*) is to reprimand the leaders of the mutiny (*increpitis seditionis auctoribus*), see to it that all escape unharmed (*donec omnes inuiolati digrederentur*), and then proceed to a good night's sleep (*noctem quietam, utque adfirmatur, non insomnem egit*, 2.49.2). We see that Otho remains unswayed by the pressures of his troops, and resolute in his decision to relent.

Keitel and Ash have demonstrated how carefully Tacitus prepares us earlier in the *Histories* for the firm and purposeful Otho we meet at 2.46–49.[21] This is most apparent in the outline of Otho's plans at 1.21–23, where we read of his intent to earn glory among posterity at death (*apud posteros ... gloria*, 1.21.2) and to die for a purpose (*merito perire*, 1.21.2); and where Tacitus introduces the character's stoutheartedness: *non erat Othonis mollis et corpori similis animus* (1.22.1—"Otho's spirit was not soft, like his body"). Earlier in the work Tacitus also appears to ready us for the role of "respondent to Aeneas" that I have suggested Otho assumes in his death-scene. At 1.47.2, just after Otho's coup, the historian describes the new emperor's decision to allow the burial of the corpses of Galba, Piso, and Vinius: *Otho cruento adhuc foro per stragem iacentium in Capitolium atque inde in Palatium uectus* **concedi corpora sepulturae** *cremarique permisit* ("Otho, after traveling in

[20] Harrison (1991) on *Aen.* 10.159–160 contrasts Aeneas' characteristic pensiveness with the "generally brief deliberations of Homeric heroes." Heinze (1993) 223–227 discusses examples of the dilatory and diffident Aeneas, and argues for a change after his trip to the Underworld in Book 6. But this over-schematization requires some special pleading from Heinze. For example, of Aeneas' bouts of uncertainty at the opening of Book 8 he writes that Virgil "has depicted Aeneas' anxious mood in stronger terms than befits his overall intention" (274, n. 21).

[21] Keitel (1987) and Ash (1999) 83–94, *pace* Shotter (1991) 3299–3301, who, like other earlier readers of Tacitus' Otho, finds him to be "an enigma and a surprise" (3301). Ash also emphasizes the uniqueness in the parallel tradition of this consistent Otho. And see my suggestion in Chapter 1 that *audenti* at *Hist.* 1.6.2 points specifically to Otho.

the still bloody forum, through the piles of the dead, to the Capitol and then to the palace, granted that the bodies be allowed burial and be cremated"). Otho's decision here may surprise the reader. His hatred of, especially, Piso had been brought to the fore by Tacitus.[22] And the sentence at 1.47.2 begins with a detailed description of the still bloody forum (*cruento adhuc foro*), littered with the slaughtered bodies of Otho's enemies (*stragem iacentium*). With this backdrop, the second half of the sentence, in which we read of Otho's granting of burial, comes as unexpected, and is all the more conspicuous.[23] Indeed, the other accounts of Otho's coup do not put such stress on his allowance of burial. Suetonius and Dio say nothing of his role in the treatment of the corpses, and Plutarch makes only a passing reference to his leniency.[24] This comparison with the other sources may indicate that Tacitus has put deliberate emphasis on the emperor's action. The clumsy redundancy of the sentence—*concedi* seems to repeat the idea inherent in *permisit*[25]—is further evidence of the weight that he seems to place on Otho's decision to grant burial.

The peculiarity of the sentence, in both its divergence from the parallel tradition and in its verbal clumsiness, can be explained if we consider the Virgilian allusion in these lines. Tacitus' odd collocation *concedi corpora sepulturae* seems to be drawn from Virgil's words *me consortem nati* **concede sepulchro**, at *Aeneid* 10.906.[26] What is more, the Virgilian passage is thematically very similar to our passage in the *Histories*—with one significant difference. At *Aeneid* 10.900–906, Mezentius, defeated by Aeneas in

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22 See e.g. the description of a gleeful Otho leering at the head of his rival Piso at 1.44.1, a passage I discuss in Chapter 3 in relation to *Hist.* 2.70.1.

23 *Pace* Perkins (1993) 853, who sees little nobility in the granting of burial here.

24 Plut., *Galba* 28.2, writes of the release of the heads of Piso, Vinius, and Galba. He then writes, after mentioning the outrage done to Galba's head: "The body of Galba was taken up by Priscus Helvidius, with Otho having allowed it. The freedman Argivus buried it at night."

25 On the construction see Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc., who reads *permisit* as a zeugma, meaning "to bid" with *concedi*, but "to permit" with *cremari*. Heraeus (1904) ad loc. regards the collocation of *concedi* and *permisit* as a pleonasm. Heubner also notes that this is the first time that *permitto* is construed with a present passive infinitive.

26 Heubner (1963–1982) and Damon (2003) ad loc. ("an unusual expression modelled on the last words of Mezentius") note the allusion. Miller (1987) 96–97 makes the case for the peculiarity of the two expressions, and thus for Tacitus' debt to Virgil. *TLL* 4.15.15 ff., under *concedo aliquem alicui rei*, lists only *Aen.* 10.906 and *Hist.* 1.47.3, as well as citations from the *Passio Petri Apostoli* (fourth–fifth c.), the codex Iustinianus (sixth c.), Ennodius (sixth c.) and Gregorius Turonensis (sixth c.). None of these authors uses *sepulchrum*, *sepultura*, or any word like them in the construction. Tacitus uses *concedo* again with *corpus* at *Ann.* 11.38.1 (*corpus matri concessum*).

combat, utters his final words to his conqueror. He does not ask Aeneas to spare his life, but does have one request, at 10.903–906:

> unum hoc per si qua est uictis uenia hostibus oro:
> corpus humo patiare tegi. scio acerba meorum
> circumstare odia: hunc, oro, defende furorem
> et me consortem nati concede sepulchro.
>
> If there is any allowance for the defeated, I ask this one thing of you: allow my body to be covered with earth. I know that my people's bitter hatred surrounds me: defend me from this madness and allow me burial, alongside my son.

In the two lines that follow Mezentius' plea, the final lines of Book 10, he is fatally stabbed in the throat by Aeneas. Virgil does not tell us there whether or not Aeneas heeds his foe's request for protection and burial. However, Book 11 begins with Aeneas' construction of a *tropaeum* for his victory over Mezentius, a tree trunk adorned with the weapons and armor of the former Etruscan king. Among the items that Aeneas affixes to the trunk is Mezentius' breastplate, described at 11.9–10: *et bis sex thoraca petitum* | *perfossumque locis* ("his breastplate, attacked and pierced in twelve places"). In the course of Mezentius' combat in Book 10, there is no mention of a blow, much less twelve blows, to his breastplate. Readers of 11.9–10 since Servius have thus argued that the twelve strikes into Mezentius' breastplate should be attributed to representatives of the twelve tribes of the Etruscans.[27] If that is the case—and I follow others in believing that it is—then we may conclude that Aeneas has not heeded Mezentius' pointed request at 10.903–906, and that he has allowed Mezentius' Etruscan enemies to unleash their *furor* on his corpse.[28] In the silence between Books 10 and 11, then, the mutilation of Mezentius' corpse takes place. Aeneas disregards his victim's first request. Whether he granted Mezentius' second request, burial beside his son, is left entirely to the space between the books.[29]

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27 Serv. Auct. ad *Aen.* 11.9 points to Virgil's mention of the *gens illi triplex, populi sub gente quaterni* at 10.202. He goes on to conclude that Mezentius' breastplate was pierced *non ergo ab Aenea, sed ab his qui 'uni odiisque uiro telisque frequentibus instant'* (10.692). On Virgil's presentation of the twelve tribes of Etruscans, see Harrison (1991) on 10.202–203.

28 On the mutilation of the corpse and Aeneas' failure to comply with Mezentius' request, see (along with Servius) Lyne (1989) 113 (followed by Harrison (1991) on 10.904–905) and Kronenberg (2005) 424 n. 76, with further bibliography. Less convinced is Horsfall (1993) 206–207, who holds that *perfodio* would not for Virgil have the graphic associations of mutilation that Lyne assigns to it. On the sanitizing reception of 11.9–10, see Thomas (2001) 138–139.

29 At 11.100–119, after the erection of the *tropaeum*, Aeneas receives Latin ambassadors and grants a general burial of their war dead. Some readers (Williams (1983) 114–115; and, less

It is this action—or, rather, lack of action—by Aeneas to which I believe Tacitus' Otho responds at *Histories* 1.47.2. We have seen that the emphasis Tacitus puts on Otho's decision to grant burial to his victims is unique in the parallel tradition. And the peculiarity of his account comes via a close allusion to *Aeneid* 10.906. The significance of the allusion lies in the difference between the two passages, that is, in the difference between the decisions made by Aeneas and Otho. The latter opts to relent in his brutality by extending burial to his combatants in civil war, whereas his epic model Aeneas, it appears, gives no such quarter to his opponent. This response to Aeneas' relentlessness, then, corresponds with and anticipates the corrections of his rage and irresoluteness that are made at Otho's death-scene.

One final allusion to the *Aeneid* in this scene may contribute to the corrective agenda that I have suggested for this passage. At 2.48.1 Tacitus writes of the calm that Otho displayed after the speech to his supporters:

> talia locutus, ut cuique aetas aut dignitas, comiter appellatos, irent propere neu remanendo iram uictoris asperarent, iuuenes auctoritate, senes precibus mouebat, **placidus ore**, intrepidus uerbis, intempestiuas suorum lacrimas coercens.
>
> After saying such things, he courteously addressed all, as befit their age and stature, and bid them to depart at once, and not exasperate the victor's anger by staying; the young he moved with his authority, the old with his imprecations—peaceful in his face, undaunted in his words, checking his men's untimely tears.

In his insistence on keeping off the Vitellians' anger (*iram uictoris*), Otho is, again, resolute (*intrepidus ... coercens*) yet calm (*placidus ore*). This two-word phrase, the only description of Otho's physical appearance in the passage, is much stranger than it may appear at first. Nowhere else does Tacitus use the adjective *placidus* of humans.[30] What is more, the *TLL* article for *placidus* cites only the usage here at *Histories* 2.48.1 for this adjective construed with, but not agreeing with, *ore*.[31]

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assertively, Harrison (1991) on 10.903–904) cite this passage as evidence that Aeneas granted Mezentius' request for burial with Lausus. Gotoff (1984) 207 maintains circularly that the refusal of Mezentius' request would be beneath *pius Aeneas*: "Mezentius has just learned the meaning of parental *pietas*. It seems inconceivable to me that Aeneas of all people could ignore Mezentius' expression of it."

[30] Gerber and Greef (1903) 1119. Tacitus uses the adjective four other times, all of bodies of water; and he uses the adverb *placide* twice.

[31] See the examples of *placidus* of humans or gods at *TLL* 10.2279.55–68. The closest (adjective with noun) match to Tacitus' *placidus ore* is Martial's *uultu placidus tuo* at 5.78.24.

Readers of this passage have noted the resemblance of Tacitus' *placidus ore* to the phrase *placido ore*, which Virgil is the first author to use, at *Aeneid* 7.194 and 11.251.[32] It is noteworthy whom Virgil is describing in these two passages. At 7.194 the phrase modifies Latinus, before his first speech in the poem, his welcoming words to Ilioneus and the other Trojans upon their arrival in Latium. At 11.251 these same words are used of Diomedes, in the report of his response to the Latins.[33] The Greek hero abstains from the war, and suggests that the Latins work out a treaty with the Trojans (11.292–293). Diomedes' encouragement of a treaty is embraced by Latinus (11.321–323), who all along had resisted his people's war against Aeneas (7.585–600).

Latinus and Diomedes are outlying "pacifists" in Virgil's Latin War.[34] And the two are linked by the fact that their first words in the poem are introduced with the veritable epithet *placido ore*. In the construction of Otho's final, defining moments, has Tacitus inserted the peculiar phrase *placidus ore* at 2.48.1 in order to hold up *his* outlying relenter alongside these relenting figures in Virgil's poem? If so, then this comparison perfectly complements the corrective allusions to Virgil's Aeneas at 2.47.3 and 2.49.1.

I have suggested that Otho speaks and acts in 2.46–49 as a respondent to the repetitiveness that comes to define the Battles of Cremona, and indeed to characterize *Histories* 1–3 as a whole. The allusions to Virgil clustered together in this passage operate in parallel. In the surrounding text there is only repetition—degenerative, destructive repetition—of Virgil's wars. To this the corrective, constructive allusions to Virgil in Otho's death-scene respond. But the message of Otho's *exemplum*—relent, resist, repeat no more—is, as we have seen, conspicuous by how extraordinary it is, and by how unheeded it goes in the rest of Tacitus' civil-war narrative.

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32 Noted by Schmaus (1887) 36 and Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc. Silius' adoptions of the phrase at 6.457, 6.536, and 8.199 may indicate that *placido ore* is a "Virgilianism." Commenting on the appearance of *placido ore* at Ovid, *Pont.* 2.2.79, Galasso (1995) ad loc. refers to *placidus ore* at *H.* 2.48.1 as a "variazione tacitiana."

33 *Aen.* 7.194 reads: *atque haec ingressis* **placido** *prior edidit* **ore**; and 11.251: *auditis ille haec* **placido** *sic reddidit* **ore**.

34 Virgil's use of *placido ore* to modify them may be contrasted with his use of *ore cruento* on four occasions to describe the violence that predominates in the poem: at *Aen.* 1.296, of *Furor impius*; at 9.341 of the lion to whom the plundering Euryalus is compared; at 10.489 of Pallas at his death; and at 12.8 of the lion to whom the war-hungry Turnus is compared. Hardie (1994) on 9.341 discusses how Virgil links 1.296, 9.341, and 12.8 and so indicates that "Trojan and Italian alike are prone to *furor*."

And in this regard the failure by Vitellius and the rest of the work's internal audience to appropriately "read" and follow Otho's *exemplum* stands itself as another *malum exemplum*, another cautionary lesson for the external audience, the readers of the *Histories*. In the Introduction to this study I discussed how in his table of contents (1.2–3) Tacitus presents this entire work that is abounding in disasters as, correspondingly, fertile of *exempla*, and mostly *mala exempla*. As I noted there, such negative *exempla* can, however, be cautionary and thus instructive and productive for the reader. And perhaps this—the use of decidedly dark material for instructive ends—is another point of contact between Tacitus and his epic predecessors Virgil and Lucan. The ancient critics Horace and Quintilian viewed poetry as a rich source for positive moral *exempla*, for *recte facta* (so Horace) and *honesta* (so Quintilian).[35] But of course poems such as the *Aeneid* and the *Bellum Civile* do not present exclusively "good deeds." As I have discussed several times in this study, a principal offering of the *Aeneid* (and the one most valuable to Tacitus in the *Histories*) is its meditation on the unrelenting repetitiveness of Roman war. This negative, cautionary model was especially appropriate for Virgil's contemporary audience, who knew nothing but the civil war that had gripped Rome for some one hundred years, and that still threatened in the early years of Augustus' supremacy. The poem's models of the callous perpetuation of war—left hauntingly open in the brutal final scene—and of Romans at war with each other were surely intended to generate in the reader of Virgil's time pause, contemplation, and caution. Lucan's poem, while seemingly resigned to the fall of the Republic that it depicts, also provides negative but instructive *exempla* for imperial readers, in, notably, the hellacious model of civil-warring Caesarism embodied by the character Caesar, a type of anti-Roman Roman-ness that Lucan loudly condemns, and discourages.

[35] Horace, *Epist.* 2.1.128–131: *pectus praeceptis format amicis*, | *asperitatis et inuidiae corrector et irae*, | *recte facta refert, orientia tempora notis* | *instruit exemplis*. Fraenkel (1957) 391 (*pace* Brink (1963–1982) ad loc.) suggests that in lines 130–131 Horace "may have in mind, above all, the *Aeneid*." See also Horace's words on poetry's aims at *AP* 333–334, which I discuss in the Introduction. And at 1.8.4–5 Quint. writes of the role of Homer and Virgil in educating children: *non modo quae diserta sed uel magis quae honesta sunt discant. ideoque optime institutum est ut ab Homero atque Vergilio lectio inciperet, quamquam ad intellegendas eorum uirtutes firmiore iudicio opus est: sed huic rei superest tempus, neque enim semel legentur. interim et sublimitate heroi carminis animus adsurgat et ex magnitudine rerum spiritum ducat et optimis imbuatur*. Not all readers of epic were in agreement on its constructiveness. See e.g. Plato's famous discussion at *Rep.* 2.377b–378e of the dangers that Homer's depiction of the gods posed to children.

The gloomy repetitiveness of *Histories* 1–3—which, I have argued, linguistically and thematically builds upon and exceeds that of the *Aeneid* and the *Bellum Civile*—is, like those works' inherent repetitiveness, exemplary, cautionary. Could Rome avoid another explosion of multi-front civil war, like the cataclysm of 68–70? Could its leaders learn when to abate, relent, and seek stability for the empire, like Otho at Cremona I, and so unlike those who precede and follow him in the text?[36] Would Tacitus' audience of political players bear another—and thus a worse—Death of Priam / Pompey / Galba, more Pharsalias and Cremonas, or a fall greater than Troy's or Rome's in 69? Was the next repetition going to be Rome's final fall, something that Tacitus says nearly occurred in 69 (1.11.3)? While the repeating and increasingly unsettling tales of *Histories* 1–3 make for a thrilling, action-packed read, the answers to the questions that they raise are, within what we have of the work,[37] dark and discouraging. But the very asking of these questions, the laying out of these negative *exempla* to external respondents, constitutes a constructive, instructive act from Tacitus.

[36] On Otho's death as a model for behavior in later civil wars, see also Neumeister (2000) 203.

[37] On Books 4–5 (and beyond) see the ensuing Epilogue.

EPILOGUE

"SAVAGE EVEN IN ITS PEACE"

At *Histories* 4.3.3 Tacitus appears to sound a concluding note to the civil wars that filled Books 1–3 when he writes:

> at Romae senatus cuncta principibus solita Vespasiano decernit, laetus et spei certus: quippe sumpta per Gallias Hispaniasque ciuilia arma, motis ad bellum Germaniis, mox Illyrico, postquam Aegyptum Iudaeam Syriamque et omnis prouincias exercitusque lustrauerant, uelut expiato terrarum orbe cepisse finem uidebantur.
>
> But at Rome the senate, in decreeing all the usual imperial powers to Vespasian, were happy and full of hope. For these civil wars that had begun in Gaul and Spain, with the Germanies and soon Illyricum rising up to war, after passing though Egypt, Judea, and Syria, and every province and army, now—as though the whole world had been expiated—seemed to have come to an end.

He follows this statement with mention of the modest, statesmanlike tidings of Vespasian (4.3.4), who was still in the East as the year 69 came to an end, but now firmly established as emperor. At last one man has a secure hold on power. At last the war is over.

Or does it only *seem* to be over? Tacitus may hint as much by concluding this tidy wrap-up of the war with the destabilizing *uidebantur*. In this Epilogue to the argument of the preceding chapters, I will consider Tacitus' continued use of the trope of repetition in the postwar narrative of the *Histories*. More precisely, I will discuss the extent to which Tacitus keeps the theme of repetitive civil war alive in his account of the Flavian Dynasty, which took up the remainder of the work. Whereas my approach in the body of this study was both inter- and intratextual, the analysis in these pages will be almost wholly intratextual, with a focus on Tacitus' development of the imagery and motifs that were established in Books 1–3. My discussion will concentrate on the material from Book 4, about the first year of Vespasian's reign. But I will also discuss (with more conjecture, to be sure) how Tacitus may have run the imagery of civil war throughout his accounts of Vespasian's, Titus', and—as a climax—Domitian's reigns.

Before offering close readings of a few passages from Book 4, let us recall from Chapter 1 how Tacitus introduces the "peacetime" Flavian narrative, in

the opening line of the *Histories*' table of contents: *opus adgredior opimum casibus, atrox proeliis, discors seditionibus, ipsa etiam pace saeuum* (1.2.1: "I approach/attack a work abounding in disasters, gloomy in its battles, split by seditions, savage even in its peace"). The part of the work treating the postwar peace, we are informed, will be "savage." In fact, after outlining the horrors of the civil wars proper and the travesties abroad (1.2.1–2), Tacitus states that "the savagery in the city was more gloomy" (1.2.3: *atrocius in urbe saeuitum*). The comparative *atrocius* pick ups on and even supersedes the promise made above of a work that is *atrox proeliis*. Not only will the narrative of the "savagery in the city" repeat the horrors of the civil wars, but the escalation / worsening that we have observed across *Histories* 1–3 will continue. In the subsequent lines of 1.2 Tacitus elaborates on the atrocities and havoc in the city when he states that "the most certain destruction came to the virtuous" (1.2.3: *ob uirtutes certissimum exitium*); and that informers, like plunderers of a captured city, "stirred up, overturned all, amid hatred and fright" (1.2.3: *agerent uerterent cuncta odio et terrore*) in the pursuit of their spoils (*praemia*).[1]

Given the decidedly warlike introduction to the postwar narrative that Tacitus offers in 1.2, we surely should not be surprised to find the imagery of civil war carried into Book 4, and beyond. And the showpiece with which Tacitus chooses to open Book 4 is also, I think, revealing of what is to follow. The book's first chapter merits printing in full:

> interfecto Vitellio bellum magis desierat quam pax coeperat. armati per urbem uictores implacabili odio uictos consectabantur: plenae caedibus uiae, cruenta fora templaque, passim trucidatis ut quemque fors obtulerat. ac mox augescente licentia scrutari ac protrahere abditos; si quem procerum habitu et iuuenta conspexerant, obtruncare nullo militum aut populi discrimine. [2] quae saeuitia recentibus odiis sanguine explebatur, dein uerterat in avaritiam. nihil usquam secretum aut clausum sinebant, Vitellianos occultari simulantes. initium id perfringendarum domuum uel, si resisteretur, causa caedis; nec deerat egentissimus quisque e plebe et pessimi seruitiorum prodere ultro dites dominos; alii ab amicis monstrabantur. [3] ubique lamenta, conclamationes et fortuna captae urbis, adeo ut Othoniani Vitellianique militis inuidiosa antea petulantia desideraretur. duces partium accendendo ciuili bello acres, temperandae uictoriae impares: quippe inter turbas et discordias pessimo cuique plurima uis, pax et quies bonis artibus indigent.

[1] See also the remarks on Tacitus' assimilation of his wartime and peacetime narratives by O'Gorman (1995) 119–120 and Sailor (2008) 190–191, who remarks at 191: "Civil war and the *delatores* posed the same threat."

> With Vitellius killed, it was more that the war had stopped than that peace had begun. Throughout the city the armed conquerors chased down the conquered with implacable hatred. The streets were filled with carnage, the forums and temples were bloody; for whomever chance threw before the victors was slaughtered in passing. And soon, as their license increased, they were searching for and dragging out those who were hidden. If they spotted anyone tall and youthful, they slaughtered him, with no regard for whether he was a soldier or a civilian. [2] While the hatreds were fresh, this savagery was satisfied by blood, but then it turned to greed. They were allowing nothing at all to remain secret and locked away, on the false grounds that Vitellians were being hidden. This was cause for breaking into homes, or, if there was resistance, an excuse for murder. Nor were there lacking the most destitute of individuals from the plebs and the worst of slaves who were voluntarily betraying their wealthy masters. Others were being pointed out by their friends. [3] Everywhere were tears, shouting, and the conditions of a captured city, so much so that the insolence of the Othonian and Vitellian soldiers, once so hated, was being longed for. The Flavian party's leaders had been eager to enflame the civil war, but were unequal to the task of tempering their victory. For, amid commotion and discord, the most power belongs to the individual who is the worst, while peace and tranquility require good skills.

So Tacitus opts to place this tableau of the Flavian victors terrorizing the city not at the end of Book 3, just after their victory and Vitellius' murder, but as the opening scene of Book 4.[2] And he chooses to depict the scene in ways that specifically recall the horrors of Books 1–3. Rome in December after Vitellius' death, we see, looks a lot like it did in January after Galba's. In particular, the forum is full of blood (*cruenta fora* at 4.1.1 recalls *cruento adhuc foro* at 1.47.2), and fear grips the city (*ciuitas pauida* at 4.2.2 brings us back to the *trepidam urbem ac … pauentem* of 1.50.1).

Most of all we are reminded of the Cremona of *Histories* 3.33. Tacitus tells us outright that the Rome of late December 69 had the lot of a captured city (*fortuna captae urbis*, 4.1.3), and with his details and diction he unmistakably points us back to the *Histories*' last *urbs capta*. Indiscriminate slaughter (*passim trucidatis, ut quemque fors obtulerat*, 4.1.1), particularly of the physically conspicuous (*si quem* **procerum habitu et iuuenta conspexerant**, *obtruncare nullo militum aut populi discrimine*, 4.1.1) is as rampant in Rome as it was at Cremona (*ubi adulta uirgo aut quis* **forma conspicuus** *incidisset, ui manibusque rapientium diuulsus ipsos postremo direptores in mutuam perniciem agebat*, 3.33.1). In both terrorized cities the victors doggedly seek

[2] Josephus, *BJ* 4.654 provides a much more condensed image of the looting and slaughter after the Flavian victory, and has the arriving Mucianus stop Antonius' soldiers from continuing it. Tacitus puts off Mucianus' arrival until *Hist.* 4.11 (a passage that I discuss below).

out what is hidden—loot at Cremona (**abdita scrutari**, 3.33.2), and people at Rome (**scrutari** *ac protrahere* **abditos**, 4.1.1). And the lust for booty that Tacitus describes at great length at 3.33.1–2 gets elaborate treatment again here at 4.1.2. In the next chapter Tacitus makes the link with Cremona explicit when describing the behavior at Rome of the plunderer *par excellence*, Antonius Primus, who "was snatching money and slaves from the household of the emperor as though they were the spoils of Cremona" (*pecuniam familiamque e principis domo quasi Cremonensem praedam rapere*, 4.2.1).

As I discussed in Chapter 3, several of these inclusions are conventional fare for the depiction of an *urbs capta*. But it is significant that Tacitus repeats many of Cremona's horrors with great linguistic closeness, and that he specifically names Cremona here in his description of the condition of Rome. He is demanding that we recall Cremona's starring role as repeated battle site and *urbs capta* in his civil wars. And so Tacitus opens Book 4 with an image of civil war *repeated* and thus continuing, and made quite conspicuously to live on past the end-post of Book 3.[3] On top of this, in a striking psychological detail, he writes that the city's population is so aggrieved by the Flavian army that "they are longing for the insolence of the Othonian and Vitellian soldiers" (4.1.3). This repetition too, like the strands of repetition that run through Books 1–3, is a regressive one. By opening Book 4 with such a tableau, Tacitus seems to indicate that the potential for such horrors—and even for further degeneration—abides, even with the war proper over and one party victorious.

Civil War in the Senate

In Chapter 1 I discussed how Tacitus destabilizes the terminus of Book 3 by narrating the entirety of Civilis' *bellum permixtum*—a war that in many ways represented another theater in the Vitellian-Flavian conflict—in Books 4 and 5, *after* his account of Vitellius' death. In a complementary move, Tacitus repeatedly brings the imagery of the civil-war battlefield from Books 1–3 into his presentation of domestic affairs in Book 4.[4]

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[3] Ash (2006) 74 likewise notes this "jagged and messy opening, which underscores how difficult it will be for the Roman state to draw a real line underneath the civil wars." See also the discussion of Pomeroy (2012) 145–146.

[4] Schäfer (1977) 461–465 and Keitel (1993) consider how Tacitus casts the events in the senate and on the Rhine in Book 4 as parallel failed efforts for *libertas*.

The first sustained episode of Book 4 is a debate between the two great senatorial opponents of the time, Helvidius Priscus and Eprius Marcellus (4.7–8). In 4.4 Tacitus had introduced Helvidius as a senator whose words, while entirely respectful towards Vespasian as the senate voted on various formalities (4.4.1–3), were free of artifice (4.4.3). Tacitus follows this judgment with an ominous note for Helvidius, and one that prepares the reader for the character's many contests over the coming books, and his eventual fall: *isque praecipuus illi dies magnae offensae initium et magnae gloriae fuit* (4.4.3: "This particular day was for him the beginning of great offense and of great glory").[5] The issue being discussed in the debate at 4.7–8 is whether envoys to Vespasian should be chosen by the magistrates (so Helvidius) or by lot (Marcellus).

Tacitus prefaces the senators' dueling speeches on the matter with a character-sketch of the Stoic Helvidius[6] (4.5) and then a review of the hostilities between the two men under Galba (4.6). Now, as Tacitus tells it in the *Annals*, in 66 Marcellus had prosecuted (16.28) and brought about the forced suicide (16.34–35) of Helvidius' father-in-law and mentor Thrasea Paetus. After the passage of power from Nero to Galba, Helvidius sought vengeance. Here in the review of those proceedings under Galba, Tacitus fashions the feud between the two senators as, without a doubt, a war. He figures Helvidius' plans to avenge the destruction (*ruina*, 4.6.1) of Thrasea as plans for a great battle victory over his enemies: *nam si caderet Marcellus, agmen reorum sternebatur* ("For if Marcellus were to fall, an army of culprits would be laid low").[7] Marcellus is imagined as falling (*caderet*), as on the battlefield, and his allies as belonging to an *agmen*, a word commonly used of battle-lines.[8] In addition, this is the one instance when Tacitus uses *sterno*, a favorite battle verb of his, of figurative destruction.[9] The metaphor

[5] See Sailor (2008) 223–228 on how Helvidius' motions in the senate in *Hist.* 4 (especially his call at 4.9.2 for the public to fund the rebuilding of the Capitol, with help from Vespasian) may anticipate his demise under the emperor (which Suet. recounts at *Vesp.* 15). And see my discussion below of how the narrative of Helvidius' feud with Vespasian could have fit into the later Vespasianic narrative.

[6] On the shallowness of Helvidius' Stoicism, and the limited significance of philosophical affiliations in the senatorial debates of *Hist.* 4, see Penwill (2003) 347–351.

[7] Earlier in 4.6.1 Tacitus may have the violent connotation of *adgredior* in mind when he writes of Helvidius' movement to attack Marcellus: *Marcellum Eprium, delatorem Thraseae, accusare adgreditur*. See further my discussion in Chapter 1 of *adgredior* at 1.2.1.

[8] *OLD* 5–8. In the *Histories*' battle-scenes see e.g. 2.22.1, 3.18.2, 3.25.1, 3.71.1, and 4.22.2, with further examples at Gerber and Greef (1903) 59. Pliny also uses the expression *agmen reorum* at *Ep.* 3.9.11, of those accused of crimes in the province of Baetica.

[9] Gerber and Greef (1903) 1546, who list twelve passages (e.g. *Hist.* 2.43.1, 3.13.2, 3.17.2,

continues in the next sentence, when he recalls the *minax certamen* ("menacing struggle") that ensued between them but then died down, *certamen* being another word frequently used, and often by Tacitus, of military battle.[10]

The feud between Helvidius and Marcellus resumes here at the dawn of Vespasian's rule, where Tacitus introduces their debate about the delegation to the new emperor as an *acre iurgium* ("a fierce quarrel").[11] *Iurgium* is of course another noun used frequently of physical confrontation.[12] The opponents' speeches are "long and hostile" (*continuas et infestas*, 4.7.1) and "hurled with great animosity on each side" (*magnis utrimque contentionibus iactata*, 4.8.5), and the reader is perhaps made to recall the back-and-forth siege warfare of the *Histories*' earlier books. At 4.8.1 Marcellus in fact refers to Helvidius' "attack" with the verb *impugnari*, which Tacitus uses just once elsewhere, of actual siege combat.[13] Marcellus' advocacy of the use of lots for choosing the delegation is in the end victorious (**uicit** *pars quae sortiri legatos malebat*, 4.8.5). His side prevails in this battle.

More war in the senate comes in the ensuing chapters. Chapter 9 begins with the words *secutum aliud certamen* ("another contest followed"), of the debate about whether senatorial approval of expenditures, including the restoration of the Capitol, was sufficient (so Helvidius, 4.9.1–2), or whether Vespasian's approval was needed. Chapter 10 treats Musonius Rufus' attack (*inuectus est*, 4.10.1) on the informer Publius Egnatius Celer, and "with this exchange, the hatreds from the days of the informers seemed to be renewed" (*ea cognitione renouari odia accusatorum uidebantur*, 4.10.1). The mood of these chapters about senatorial affairs is then captured succinctly at 4.11.1, Tacitus' transition to the arrival of Mucianus at Rome:

> tali rerum statu, cum discordia inter patres, ira apud uictos, nulla in uictoribus auctoritas, non leges, non princeps in ciuitate essent, Mucianus urbem ingressus cuncta simul in se traxit.

3.77.1, and 4.33.2) in which Tacitus uses *sterno* for "to lay low" *proprie* (*OLD* 7). See also my discussion of *prosterno* below.

10 *OLD* 2. Note e.g. *Hist.* 2.21.1, 2.70.3, and 3.81.2, with further examples at Gerber and Greef (1903) 163.

11 See Pigoń (1992) on the rhetorical poses of each speaker here, and for the suggestion that each man's end is foreshadowed in these speeches.

12 See e.g. *Hist.* 1.64.2, 2.27.2, and 2.88.3. Ash (2007a) on 2.53.1 remarks that the appearance of *iurgium* there, of a contest in the senate, soon after its appearance at 2.27.2, of quarrelling troops, "suggests blurring of boundaries between soldiers ... and senators." Heubner (1963–1982) ad loc. notes that the collocation *acre iurgium* appears first here, and marks this feud as "besonders gereizt und heftig."

13 This is of Germanicus' army's attack on German earthworks at *Ann.* 2.20.2. Heubner (1963–1982) on 4.8.1 notes that Tacitus is the first author to join *impugno* and *sententia.*

> With this state of affairs—when there was discord in the senate, anger among the conquered, no authority among the conquerors, and in the state as a whole no laws, no emperor—Mucianus entered the city and pulled everything all at once to himself.

The strident contests in the senate constitute nothing less than civil war, *discordia*. The absence of an emperor (*non princeps*) and of any authority among the ruling party (*nulla in uictoribus auctoritas*) recalls the confusion about leadership and powerlessness among leaders that ran so rampant in Books 1–3. At *Annals* 3.28.1, during a digression on the history of law at Rome, Tacitus includes the absence of law among the definitive conditions of civil war: *exin continua per uiginti annos discordia, non mos, non ius: deterrima quaeque impune ac multa honesta exitio fuere* ("Then there was ongoing discord for twenty years, no custom, no law: each of the worst deeds went unpunished, and many honorable acts led to death").[14] This same feature (*non leges*) characterizes the start of Vespasian's reign. The conditions of civil war, Tacitus reveals in no uncertain terms in 4.11, are hardly behind us.

Mucianus' entrance into the city is also ominous. The phrase *urbem ingressus* at 4.11.1 marks on the plainest level Mucianus' arrival at Rome. But *ingredior* is a verb that Tacitus uses elsewhere as a synonym of *adgredior*, "to attack."[15] And the three other appearances of the collocation *ingredior* + *urbs* in the *Histories* are loaded ones. It is used of Galba's bloody entrance into Rome, as recalled by Otho (1.37.3); of Vitellius' arrival with his legions (2.89.1), who pour out through (2.93.1) and will eventually wage war throughout (3.70–84) the city; and of Antonius Primus' legions' arrival at 3.82.1. Is Mucianus' entrance into Rome, like these prior ones, more an attack than an entrance? Immediately after arriving in the city, Mucianus is depicted during his consolidation of power as being "surrounded by armed guards and bargaining for homes and gardens" (*stipatus armatis domos hortosque permutans*, 4.11.2), an image that recalls the Flavian looters rummaging through homes at Cremona (3.33.2) and then Rome (4.1.2).

Furthermore, additional acts of civil war straightaway become the defining feature of Mucianus' regency. His first move is the murder of Calpurnius Galerianus, a figure whose innocence Tacitus emphasizes, at 4.11.2:

> is fuit filius Gai Pisonis, nihil ausus: sed nomen insigne et decora ipsius iuuenta rumore uulgi celebrabantur, erantque in ciuitate adhuc turbida et nouis sermonibus laeta qui principatus inanem ei famam circumdarent.

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14 He is referring to the years 49–29 BCE.

15 At *Ann.* 6.4.1. This sense is *OLD* 6. And see *TLL* 7.1.1570.13–24 for more examples of *ingredior* used "aggrediendi ui hostili."

> He was the son of Gaius Piso [the conspirator of 65 CE], and had attempted nothing. But his distinguished name and youthful good looks were being celebrated in the gossip of the crowd, and, in a city that was still unsettled and fertile of revolutionary talk, there were those who linked him with idle rumors about the principate.

This atmosphere of revolutionary gossip (*nouis sermonibus*) drives much of Mucianus' agenda as stand-in for Vespasian.[16] He is quick to wipe out any potential rivals, however free of guilt. He orders the murder of the governor of Africa Lucius Piso, who, like his cousin and son-in-law Calpurnius Galerianus, is entirely innocent of the charges of an alliance with the Vitellian armies (4.38.1 and 4.49.2).[17] Mucianus also eliminates Vitellius' seven-year-old son, on the grounds that "discord would remain, if he did not check the growth of the seeds of war" (*mansuram discordiam … ni semina belli restinxisset*, 4.80.1). The agricultural metaphor—one that Tacitus first used in the introduction to his disaster narrative back at 1.2.1—here underlines the great potential for the growth and spread of *discordia*, even if its seeds are lying in just a child.[18]

Another defining act of Mucianus' tenure as regent is his articulation of a policy of leniency towards the informers who thrived under Nero. Tacitus commits the greater part of his seven chapters on senatorial business in early January 70 (4.39–45) to continued debate about the rightful treatment of informers. The passage reads in many ways like a sequel to the senatorial contests of December 69 described at 4.4.3–4.10. And this section, like the earlier one (recall *uidebantur* at 4.3.3), is preceded by an attractive but false note of the restoration of order. After detailing in 4.39 the regime's new appointments and, most importantly, Mucianus' tactful separation of the suspected Antonius Primus and his loyal legionaries (4.39.3–4), Tacitus concludes the chapter by declaring: *sic egesto quidquid turbidum redi⟨i⟩t urbi sua forma legesque et munia magistratuum* (4.39.4: "So, with whatever was

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16 Dio's (66.2) brief discussion of Mucianus' regency is much more sober. He does not address at all the murders of Calpurnius Galerianus and Lucius Piso, the governor of Africa. Damon (2006) 273–275 also discusses Tacitus' depiction of Mucianus' "problematic" (274) regency.

17 The tale of Lucius Piso's demise and assassination is told at 4.48–50. See further Damon (2006) 268–269; as well as O'Gorman (2006) 284–287 on these two Pisones' place in the contrafactual "Pisonian dynasty" that, she suggests, Tacitus imbeds in the narrative of the *Hist.* and *Ann.*

18 See Dio, 65.1.2, for the age of Vitellius' son (six at the start of 69). Martin and Woodman (1989) on *Ann.* 4.27.1 and Ash (2007a) on 2.76.4 discuss Tacitus' and other authors' use of the metaphor of "seeds of war." See also my discussion in the Introduction of the use of the agricultural metaphor at 1.2.1 and 1.3.1.

disruptive removed, the appearance, laws, and rightful duties of magistrates returned to the city"). But disruption, as it happens, is not at all removed: senatorial combat takes off again in the very next chapter. The battle is sparked by the request from Junius Mauricius to open the imperial archives to reveal the names of informers (4.40.3). After the presiding Domitian dismissively and ominously declines this request (*consulendum tali super re principem respondit,* 4.40.3),[19] many senators move that all in their number swear before the gods that they have not profited from the destruction of fellow citizens (4.41.1). Several well-known Neronian informers are not able to do so without perjuring themselves. As a result they are attacked by their colleagues (note especially **proturbant** at 4.41.3,[20] giving the lie to the claim *egesto quidquid* **turbidum** at 4.39.4), and the warfare of these chapters is underway.

The main event is a speech by Curtius Montanus, who assails the prosperous Neronian informer Aquilius Regulus, after Regulus' brother Vipstanus Messalla has spoken on his behalf (4.42.1–2). As he did earlier in Book 4, Tacitus imbues this episode with the language of warfare so fresh on the reader's mind from Books 1–3. The charges in Montanus' "savage speech" (*truci oratione,* 4.42.2) concern Regulus' activity under Nero. But, as we shall see, Tacitus has Montanus and his party understand Regulus' past "acts of war" as provocation for present, reciprocal action. Furthermore, the portrait of this informer *par excellence,* placed here at the beginning of the Flavian reign, gives the reader an image of what is at stake in the discussion of a policy regarding informers. Montanus' harangue reaches its peak at 4.42.4, where he says of Regulus:

> libidine sanguinis et hiatu praemiorum ignotum adhuc ingenium et nullis defensionibus expertum caede nobili imbuisti, cum ex funere rei publicae raptis consularibus spoliis, septuagiens sestertio saginatus et sacerdotio fulgens innoxios pueros, inlustres senes, conspicuas feminas eadem ruina prosterneres, cum segnitiam Neronis incusares, quod per singulas domos seque et delatores fatigaret: posse uniuersum senatum una uoce subuerti.

> With a lust for blood and a mouth gaping at rewards, you dipped your talents—still unknown and with no experience in defense cases—in noble blood, when, snatching up consular spoils from the destruction of the state, fattened on 7 million sesterces, and sparkling with your priestly honors, you

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[19] Levick (1999) 84: "This was unthinkable to the new régime, not just because it would mean the senate being torn apart by the revelations, but because the men who would go under were just those who might be most useful."

[20] The full line at 4.41.3 reads: *ad Paccium Africanum transgressi eum quoque proturbant, tamquam Neroni Scribonios fratres concordia opibusque insignis ad exitium monstrauisset.*

> leveled to the ground innocent children, illustrious old men, and prominent women—all in the same blow; [and] when you charged Nero with being too slow, since he was exhausting himself and his informers by running through homes individually: the whole senate could be destroyed with just one word!

Montanus' rapid-fire period of charges concludes with an image of mass destruction (*posse uniuersum senatum una uoce subuerti*) that expands on the image of Regulus' destructiveness that Tacitus gave in his own voice at 4.42.1: *Regulum subuersa Crassorum et Orfiti domus in summum odium extulerat* ("The destruction of the house of the Crassi and Orfitus had brought Regulus into the utmost hatred"). Each other time he uses *subuerto* in the *Histories* it is of literal destruction: the upturning of Galba's statues (3.7.2), the upsetting of the buildings in the legionary camp in Germany, in advance of Civilis' attack (4.22.1), and the destruction of the German legions' winter quarters by Civilis' troops (4.61.3). The literal upheaval brought on by war, we see, is mirrored in the figurative upheaval performed by the informer Regulus and his ilk.

In another image that is familiar to us from earlier in the *Histories*, Regulus is cast by Montanus as a plunderer (*hiatu praemiorum*, *raptis consularibus spoliis*), and one who paid no heed to age or gender (*innoxios pueros, inlustres senes, conspicuas feminas*). We are reminded of the looting and the slaughter of young and old, male and female at Cremona (3.33), which was in many ways repeated at Tacitus' second *urbs capta*, Rome (4.1).[21] Complementing the depiction of Regulus as the plunderer of a city under siege is the verb used for his destructiveness, *prosterno*. Of Tacitus' ten uses of this verb, seven are of literal "laying waste" in military contexts. Two of the three figurative uses are in this passage, at 4.42.4, of Regulus' destructive ways, and immediately afterwards, at 4.43.1.[22] There we read of the reaction to Montanus' speech, which went on to single out Eprius Marcellus as well: *tanto cum adsensu senatus auditus est Montanus ut spem caperet Heluidius posse etiam Marcellum prosterni* ("Montanus was received with such great approval from the senate that Helvidius took hope that Marcellus too could be laid low"). In the success of Montanus' rousing speech Helvidius sees an opportunity for his side to strike back: Regulus', Marcellus', and the other

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[21] On 3.33 see Chapter 3, and on 4.1 see above in this Epilogue.

[22] Gerber and Greef (1903) 1225. Notable among the literal uses is 3.27.3, of the slaughter at Cremona II, which I discussed in Chapter 3. The other figurative use is at *Dial.* 11.1, where Maternus speaks of his expectation that Aper "would depreciate poets and lay low the pursuit of poetry" (*detrectaret poetas atque carminum studia prosterneret*).

informers' destructiveness (*prosterneres*, 4.42.4) under Nero has a chance to be met by a counterattack (*prosterni*, 4.43.1). The intratext is prospective: this series of figurative attacks, sieges, and slayings—this civil war in the senate—is sure to go on.

The last image of the senate that Tacitus gives us in 4.43 is, again, familiar from Books 1–3, with battle lines drawn and the fighting spirited: *cum glisceret certamen, hinc multi bonique, inde pauci et ualidi pertinacibus odiis tenderent, consumptus per discordiam dies* (4.43.2: "As this contest grew, many virtuous men on one side and a strong minority on the other battled with stubborn and ongoing hatred, and the day was consumed by discord").[23] In the very next sentence, Tacitus reveals that the *discordia* sparked by the survival of informers will not be resolved any time soon. For at 4.44.1 he writes: *proximo senatu, inchoante Caesare de abolendo dolore iraque et priorum temporum necessitatibus, censuit Mucianus prolixe pro accusatoribus* ("At the next meeting of the senate, Domitian began by speaking about forgetting the resentment, anger, and drastic measures of former times, and Mucianus spoke at length on behalf of the informers"). This policy of leniency, anticipated by the decision at 4.40.3 to keep the state archives under cover, foreshadows the emperor Domitian's reliance on informers later in the *Histories*.[24] More immediately, it also indicates that here at the dawn of Vespasian's reign informers will go unpunished, their ability to lay waste to their fellow Romans unchecked. The figurative "plunderer of Rome" Regulus, for one, will indeed prosper well into Domitian's reign.[25] In the last sentence of 4.44,[26] Tacitus wraps up this episode with an assurance that the power of the informers, and thus the resulting back-and-forth among factions in the senate, will persist: *accusatorum ingenia et opes et exercita malis artibus potentia timebantur* (4.44.3: "The informers' talents and wealth and the power that they exercised in evil ways continued to be feared").

[23] Compare e.g. how Tacitus describes the opposing Vitellian and Othonian troops at Placentia, at 2.21.4: **hinc** *legionum et Germanici exercitus robur*, **inde** *urbanae militiae et praetoriarum cohortium decus attollentium*.

[24] Schäfer (1977) 466. At 465–470 Schäfer explores the many ways in which the events of Book 4 foreshadow the contents of the *Histories*' later books. See also Chilver and Townend (1985) 5, Sage (1990) 911–912, and Ash (1999) 139–140 on the anticipation of Domitian's reign in Books 3 and 4.

[25] See the exhaustive prosopography of Regulus by Rutledge (2001) 192–198.

[26] After the report in 4.44.2–3 of the token exiles of the insignificant (*uiles*, 4.44.3) senators Sosianus and Sagitta.

"Savagery in the City" in the Lost Books?

From what we read of the Flavian emperors in Pliny, Suetonius, and Dio, it seems clear that the "savage peace" whose narration Tacitus promises in 1.2 was at its most savage during Domitian's reign, and particularly in the final, especially oppressive and informer-filled years of 93–96,[27] which provided the material for the *Histories*' concluding books. The picture of these years in other sources is confirmed by Tacitus' own brief treatment of that period in the *Agricola*, to which I shall turn shortly.

But Tacitus also leaves little doubt that, as indicated at 4.40.3 and 4.44 before Vespasian's arrival at Rome, *delatores* continued to prosper under him, and that at least this manifestation of *discordia* carried on into Vespasian's reign. A key passage for understanding this is 2.84.2, during the description of Vespasian's and Mucianus' efforts to raise money for their war against Vitellius:

> passim delationes, et locupletissimus quisque in praedam correpti. quae grauia atque intoleranda, sed necessitate armorum excusata etiam in pace mansere, ipso Vespasiano inter initia imperii ad obtinendas iniquitates haud perinde obstinante, donec indulgentia fortunae et prauis magistris didicit aususque est.
>
> There were several accusations by informers, and each of the richest men was snatched onto for plunder. Such oppressive and intolerable acts, though excused by the necessities of war, continued in peacetime. At the beginning of his rule Vespasian himself was not entirely set on keeping up these acts of injustice, until, under the influence of fortune's kindness and depraved teachers, he learned and dared to do so.

With the familiar phrase *etiam in pace* Tacitus reveals that Vespasian's use of informers after the war will be an ongoing storyline in this work that is "savage even in its peace" (*ipsa etiam pace saeuum*, 1.2.1).[28] What is more, the chronological movement of the sentence also indicates that Vespasian's changing stance on the use of informers will be marked, as is so often the

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[27] Rutledge (2001) 126–135 surveys the activity of informers during the Flavian period and expresses the reservation that, in light of the paucity and patchiness of the sources, we "have only the vaguest details concerning senatorial opposition under Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian, and the *delator*'s role in suppressing it" (126). He peculiarly makes no mention of *Hist.* 2.84 in his discussions at 51–52 and 126–129 of *delatores* under Vespasian.

[28] Ash (2007a) ad loc. notes the "expressive idea that war and peace are virtually indistinguishable from one another recurs in Tacitus" and also refers to *Hist.* 1.2.1, 4.1.1, and the work on the *Ann.* by Keitel (1984), which I discuss below.

case in this work, by a decided regression.[29] Further demonstration of his embrace of informers, or at least his unwillingness to punish them, is found in Aper's description at *Dialogus* 8.3 of the prominent Neronian *delatores* Eprius Marcellus and Vibius Crispus, who "as leading men in the friendship of Caesar [Vespasian] do and carry all before them, and are esteemed by the emperor himself with a certain reverence" (*principes in Caesaris amicitia agunt feruntque cuncta atque ab ipso principe cum quadam reverentia diliguntur*). The phrase that Aper uses to describe, with a pregnant lack of specificity, what it is that Marcellus and Crispus do, *agunt feruntque cuncta*, is quite similar to the expression Tacitus will later use in the *Histories*' table of contents of informers who "stirred up, overturned all, amid hatred and fright" (1.2.3: *agerent uerterent cuncta odio et terrore*).[30]

If we turn to our other sources, it is also telling that both Titus, succeeding Vespasian, and Domitian, succeeding Titus, saw it fit to punish active informers when they entered office.[31] *Delatores*, it is clear, were an abiding presence at Rome, and surely under the Flavians. Indeed, Tacitus' lament at *Annals* 4.30.3, uttered amid his treatment of prosecutions under Tiberius, sounds like a reflection on a permanent condition at Rome: *sic delatores, genus hominum publico exitio repertum et ⟨ne⟩ poenis quidem umquam satis coercitum, per praemia eliciebantur* ("And so informers, a race of men founded for the destruction of the people and never sufficiently restrained, even by punishments, continued to be tempted by rewards").[32]

All of this is not to say that Tacitus neglected the positive, stabilizing achievements of Vespasian and Titus, under whom, let us recall, his political career took off (*Hist.* 1.1.3). As Tacitus announces in the programmatic

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29 Vespasian's increasing comfort with the use of *delatores* is, then, presumably not one of the ways in which the emperor "changed for the better," as Tacitus famously but somewhat cryptically states at 1.50.4 (*solusque omnium ante se principum in melius mu⟨ta⟩tus est*). See Morgan (1994b) 172–174 on these two passages and on Tacitus' ambivalence towards Vespasian. Dio reports at 66.9.1 of Vespasian's putting an end to *maiestas* trials, though such a measure would merely remove "an important arrow in the *delator*'s quiver" (Rutledge (2001) 87), not endanger the practice of delation.

30 See further Mayer (2001) on *Dial.* 8.3 on these "hardly flattering" phrases. The success of Marcellus in the later books seems to be foretold not just by his starring (and triumphant) role in the senatorial contests of Book 4, but also by Tacitus' incisive words about his and Mucianus' extravagance at 2.95.3. After comparing them with the freedmen of Vespasian's predecessors, Tacitus concludes tartly: *magis alii homines quam alii mores*.

31 See Suet., *Titus* 8.5 and Dio, 66.19.1–3; and Suet., *Dom.* 9.3. Crook (1951) 174 aptly comments: "Both passages clearly refer to active delators, who attempted to lay informations before Titus and Domitian." On this continuity see too Boyle (2003) 36.

32 Damon (2003) on 1.2.3 points to the significance of this line.

opening line of Book 2, the Flavian victory did in the event bring happiness (*laetum*) to the state. But, he makes it clear, it was a happiness mixed with more gloom (*atrox*).[33] And several strands of gloomy discord were surely present in the years 70–81 for Tacitus to pick up. On top of the successes of informers that seem to have continued under Vespasian and, to one degree or another, Titus, plenty of other civil disturbances of various types beset their reigns. Suetonius (*Vespasian* 15) and Dio (66.12.1–2) fill us in on the feud between Vespasian and Helvidius Priscus, for which, as we have seen, Tacitus appears to lay the textual groundwork at *Histories* 4.4–8. The man's opposition to the emperor, which Dio describes as nothing short of an attempt at revolution (νεώτερα αὐτοῖς πράγματα ἐπεσάγειν, 66.12.2), led to Helvidius' exile and ultimately his murder.[34] Dio also reports of Vespasian's expulsion, at Mucianus' urging, of many philosophers from the city for "using the name of philosophy to teach publicly many things that were not appropriate for the times" (66.13.1).[35] The conspiracy led by Vespasian's confidantes Caecina and Eprius Marcellus of which Dio writes (66.16.3; Suetonius, *Titus* 6.2, writes only of Caecina's involvement) and its suppression by the praetorian prefect Titus surely also offered rich material for Tacitus to keep up the narrative strand of ongoing discord.[36] Yet another, if more remote, civil threat was posed by the false Nero Terentius Maximus, whose uprising in the East against Titus is noted by Dio.[37]

Whatever Tacitus did with this fruitful material from Vespasian's and Titus' reigns, we can be quite confident that he depicted the internal strife

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33 The full line at *Hist.* 2.1.1 reads: *struebat iam fortuna in diuersa parte terrarum initia causasque imperio, quo uaria sorte laetum rei publicae aut atrox, ipsis principibus prosperum uel exitio fuit.* Even if we schematically assign *laetum* to Vespasian and Titus and *atrox* to Domitian (as Irvine (1952) ad loc., Chilver (1979) ad loc., and Haynes (2003) 126 do), we are nevertheless reminded here at any early point in the *Hist.* that Domitian was always part of the Flavian package. See further my discussion below.

34 Suet., *Vesp.* 15, writes of the emperor's unsuccessful attempt to recall the assassins he had sent for Helvidius. On the references to an organized revolution at Dio, 66.12.2, see further Murison (1999) 165, who regards Dio's account of an organized movement against Vespasian as "almost certainly false." Another possible victim of Vespasian was the playwright Curiatius Maternus featured in the *Dial.*, on whom see my discussion, with bibliography, in the Introduction.

35 Rutledge (2001) 127–128 considers the possibility that the Stoic Helvidius' expulsion fell under the general sweep of philosophers described by Dio. See also Levick (1999) 89–90.

36 On the alleged conspiracy see Crook (1951) 168–169 and Levick (1999) 192–195, both of whom suspect the affair to have been orchestrated by Titus in a power-grabbing gesture to eliminate formidable rivals. Murison (1999) 174 is less suspicious of our sources on this.

37 66.19.3b. See further the discussion by Murison (1999) 183–185 (184: "How serious a matter this actually was for the Romans is impossible to determine").

under Domitian as civil war. We get an idea of how he may have treated the "savagery in the city" during Domitian's reign at *Agricola* 45.1–2. Here he turns the treason trials of late 93 CE, which Suetonius says resulted in the deaths of "many senators, including several ex-consuls,"[38] into all-out war. Of Agricola's death prior to 93 he writes: *non uidit Agricola obsessam curiam et clausum armis senatum et eadem strage tot consularium caedes* (45.1: "Agricola did not see the senate house under siege, the senate shut in by armed guards, and the slaughter of so many consulars in the same massacre"). So, the armed guard that Domitian provided for the trials is made to besiege (*obsessam*) the senate house;[39] and the series of separate executions of ex-consuls becomes one simultaneous massacre (*eadem strage*).[40] Tacitus goes on to state that, at the time of Agricola's death, the infamous informer Mettius Carus still had just one victory, or conquest (*una adhuc uictoria Carus Mettius censebatur*, 45.1). When he writes chillingly that the executed Senecio "spattered us with innocent blood," (45.1: *nos innocenti sanguine Senecio perfudit*), he may even allude to Catullus' and Virgil's uses of the pair *perfundo* and *sanguis* for, specifically, the civil wars of their times.[41]

Apart from the unforgettable picture in *Agricola* 45, and the other references to Domitian's savagery elsewhere in that work,[42] there are a few passages in the extant books of the *Histories* that seem to prepare the reader for the coming portrait of Domitian the civil warrior. I have already noted how the young Domitian's gesture of leniency towards Neronian informers in January 70 (4.44.1) may look ahead to his own embrace of them later in

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38 Suet., *Dom.* 10.2. He names eleven consular victims, at 10.2–4, 11.1, and 15.1, discussed by Jones (1992) 182–188. See also the reporting of Domitian's various executions and banishments in 89 and afterwards by Dio, 67.11.2–14.

39 As Ogilvie and Richmond (1967) ad loc. note, Tacitus will use similar siege imagery of the guard Nero positions at the trials of Thrasea and Soranus at *Ann.* 16.27.1.

40 Rogers (1960) 20 writes of the "extravagant language" in this passage.

41 Ogilvie and Richmond (1967) ad loc. note the correspondence with Cat. 64.399 (*perfudere manus fraterno sanguine fratres*) and Virgil *Geo.* 2.510 (*gaudent perfusi sanguine fratrum*), a passage that, as I discussed in the Introduction, Tacitus knew very well. The only appearance of *sanguis* with *perfundo* prior to Catullus and Virgil that I have found is at *Rhet. Her.* 4.58. After Virgil (who also uses the pair at *Aen.* 10.520 and 11.88), the expression is embraced by the poets: Ovid (5 times), Lucan (3 times), Silius (twice), and Statius (3 times). Tellingly, Petronius uses the expression twice in his mock epic "Bellum Civile," at 120 (line 63) and 123 (line 209).

42 Note esp. *Agr.* 2.1, where Tacitus describes the burning of the biographies of Thrasea and Helvidius Priscus as acts of savagery (*in libros quoque eorum saeuitum*, comparable to his articulation *atrocius in urbe saeuitum* at *Hist.* 1.2.3); and 3.2, of the Romans who died as a result of Domitian's savagery (*promptissimus quisque saeuitia principis interciderunt*).

Tacitus' narrative.[43] The historian may also have developed, as a harbinger of Domitian's public crimes, the civil wars the emperor-to-be waged within his family. He appears to lay the groundwork for such a parallel narrative in the final chapter of Book 4. There he reports that Domitian sent secret messengers to Petilius Cerialis to ask whether the general would hand over his army to him. Of Domitian's gesture Tacitus writes: *qua cogitatione bellum aduersus patrem agitauerit an opes uiresque aduersus fratrem, in incerto fuit* (4.86.1: "It was uncertain whether through this plan he was thinking of war against his father, or of compiling resources and strength against his brother"). Whether Tacitus developed more fully the intrafamilial tension with Vespasian or (as Suetonius does)[44] with Titus, we cannot say. It is tantalizing moments like this one that make the loss of the remainder of the *Histories* all the more lamentable.

The foreboding image of Domitian that concludes Book 4 works in tandem with the similarly ominous picture of him in the last chapter of Book 3. During the battle between the Vitellians and Flavians on the Capitol, Domitian hides himself in a servant's home, and then flees the fighting (3.74.1). In the book's final sentence, Tacitus describes Domitian's emergence from cover after Vitellius' murder: *Domitianum, postquam nihil hostile metuebatur, ad duces partium progressum et Caesarem consalutatum miles frequens utque erat in armis in paternos penates deduxit* (3.86.3: "When there was nothing more to be feared from the enemy, Domitian came forward to the leaders of the party. The many assembled soldiers greeted him as Caesar and, armed as they were, led him to his father's home"). In this one image,

[43] One leading informer in Domitian's final years was Baebius Massa. We get an impression of how Tacitus portrayed Massa from his words of foreboding at 4.50.2, where he names Massa, who was a procurator of Africa in 70, as the man responsible for pointing out the legate Piso to the assassins sent for him. On this act Tacitus remarks: *iam tunc optimo cuique exitiosus et in⟨ter⟩ causas malorum quae mox tulimus saepius rediturus* ("Already then Massa was destructive to each of the best men, and destined to reappear, quite often, among the causes of the evils that we soon endured"). This embodiment of destruction (*exitiosus*), it is clear, figures prominently in the senatorial combat of the later books. On Massa as an exemplar of delation, see Juvenal 1.35 and Rutledge (2001) 202–204, who goes over the evidence for his activities as an informer. Pliny writes of his own prosecution of Massa for misconduct during his time as proconsul of Baetica at *Ep.* 3.4, 6.29.8–10, and 7.33.

[44] Suetonius' report of Domitian's plans in 70 CE is more benign, and refers only to Domitian's rivalry with Titus: *expeditionem quoque in Galliam Germaniasque neque necessariam et dissuadentibus paternis amicis inchoauit, tantum ut fratri se et opibus et dignatione adaequaret* (*Dom.* 2.1). He then goes on to write of Domitian's constant plotting against Titus after Vespasian's death: *neque cessauit ex eo insidias struere fratri clam palamque* (2.3). Schäfer (1977) 469 suggests that at 4.86.1 Tacitus is foreshadowing the later strife between Domitian and Titus.

"paused" at the close of Book 3, Tacitus offers a snapshot of the cowardice, as well as the early power grabbing, of the prince and emperor-to-be.

In this suggestion for a certain continuity of theme—that is, the theme of repeated, ongoing civil war—into the Flavian books and thus across the *Histories*, another point bears consideration. In the preface to the *Agricola*, after he describes in brief the oppressiveness of Domitian's recently concluded reign (2.1–3.2), Tacitus announces his plan to record in the future "the memory of our prior servitude, and my testimony to the present prosperity" (*memoriam prioris seruitutis ac testimonium praesentium bonorum*, 3.3). So Tacitus' original plan for the work that we know as the *Histories* was to write of Domitian's rule and then at least some part of the reigns of Nerva and Trajan.[45] But when he came to the project, he realized that he needed to go further back: Domitian's practices and policies could not be understood without a history of Vespasian and Titus, who themselves required treatment of "that one long year" in order to be contextualized and comprehended. If we understand, then, that Tacitus' creative plan *began* with Domitian, and then worked backwards, does this not fit with the sense of continuity of theme that I have suggested runs through the *Histories*, from the civil warring proper of Books 1–3 into the greater atrocity (recall *atrocius in urbe saeuitum* at 1.2.3) of the Flavian years, peaking in Domitian's reign, but not without precedent and prequel in Vespasian's and Titus' reigns? To look at this same issue from the perspective of Tacitus' readers, his fellow survivors of Domitian, they surely read the earlier books with the mind's eye at all times peering ahead to where the narrative was going, to its rousing conclusion, to the tyrant's (and the work's) greatest outrages and his subsequent (and the work's climactic) fall. It seems reasonable to surmise that the extant books and the remainder of the books about Vespasian and Titus are in many ways prologue—or anticipatory doublet on a grand scale—to the *Histories*' main event, Domitian.[46]

One particular episode from Domitian's reign that, I suspect, featured prominently in the *Histories*' meaningfully repetitive structure was the German legions' declaration of Antonius Saturninus, the governor of Upper

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[45] On the change of plans, see e.g. Ogilvie and Richmond (1967) ad loc., Martin (1981) 67, Birley (2000) 239, and Sailor (2008) 153–156.

[46] Syme (1958) 211–216 offers a brilliant reconstruction of the work, with Book 6 rounding out Vespasian's reign, Book 7 covering Titus's, Books 8–9 on Domitian's milder years 81–89 and then 10–12 on the more oppressive years 89–96. *Contra* my argument here, Syme states that Tacitus "did not allow [his service and experience under Domitian] to distort his account of Vespasian and Titus" (210). Ash (2009) 88–89 suggests a somewhat different reconstruction of the lost books, with less space allotted to Domitian's reign.

Germany, as their emperor on January 1, 89. The reader of this episode would doubtless recall the declaration of Vitellius, governor of Lower Germany at the time, as emperor by the German legions on January 1, 69. Syme has suggested that Tacitus opened Book 10, and the final triad of the *Histories*, with this replay of events in Germany at the opening of Book 1.[47] Now, Saturninus' *bellum ciuile* (as Tacitus calls it at 1.2.1,[48] and Suetonius at *Domitian* 6.2 and 10.5) was quickly suppressed, and Domitian's position secured. There would be no victorious Vitellius this time. Nevertheless, it is possible that Tacitus' telling of the years 89–96 *was*, in its broad strokes, presented as a repetition of the narrative of *Histories* 1–3. Suetonius (*Domitian* 10.5) and Dio (67.11.2–3) tell us that the final, harshest, and, most civil-war-like years of Domitian's reign to a great extent *resulted* from Saturninus' revolt, which was a "pretext" (ἀφορμῆς, Dio 67.11.2) for much of the killing that ensued.[49] And so the final books of the *Histories* may well have played out just as the opening books did, with a revolt abroad setting off more and greater *discordia* and civil war at home.[50]

If the repetition of civil conflict was to be a Leitmotif across the *Histories*, then it was certainly fitting for Tacitus to begin the work where he does, January 1, 69. Civil war proper—that waged by Nero, Vindex, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius—is feverishly underway, to be repeated, continued, stretched out on its many fronts and in its many forms over the course of the *Histories*.

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[47] Syme (1958) 213: "It gave the historian a year beginning with sharp action, to recall 69. The events concorded miraculously with the demands of structure." Syme (1978) 20–21 suggests another parallel in the mediocrity and fecklessness of Hordeonius Flaccus and Vitellius in 69 and Saturninus in 89. On Saturninus' revolt, see Suet., *Dom.* 6.2, 7.3, and 10.5; Dio, 67.11.1–2; and Murison (1999) 244–245, with more ancient citations and modern bibliography.

[48] It is one of the *trina bella ciuilia* introduced in the table of contents (so Heubner (1963–1982) and Damon (2003) ad loc.).

[49] At *Dom.* 10.5 Suetonius writes of Domitian: *uerum aliquanto post ciuilis belli uictoriam saeuior*; he goes on to describe the tortures he employed to learn of other conspirators.

The "near miss" of Saturninus' revolt, in its great similarities with Vitellius' ascent, may also have compelled the reader to reflect upon the repeated and seemingly unending series of threats to Roman stability from revolts and mutinies in the provinces. This matter was clearly an abiding interest of Tacitus': the seriousness of the German threat in particular he had held up prominently in *Germania* 37, a passage that some have read as prescriptive to Trajan (for a discussion see Krebs (2010)). And it is certainly significant that Tacitus commits a great part of the opening book of his next work to the mutinies in Pannonia and (again) Germany (*Annals* 1.16–52). The events of January 89, a near replay of January 69, were perfectly suited for narrative reflection on this particular repetitive Roman problem.

[50] Syme (1958) 214: "Thus the last three books of the *Historiae* form a pendant to the first three, the Domitianic tyranny matching the 'longus et unus annus' in which three emperors met their doom."

And the point where Tacitus chooses to end the work may be just as significant as its starting point, just as reflective of the possibilities of civil war's expansiveness. In the design of a work that (as I suggested above) reached a climax with Domitian, his assassination in September 96 seems to mark a natural stopping point. But Domitian's death and the accession of Nerva, who is elderly and under threat from the unsupportive praetorian guard, also brings us thematically right back to the beginning point of the *Histories*, to the very similar crisis that faced Galba soon after he succeeded Nero. As Dio tells it, Nerva's adoption of Trajan, then the governor of Upper Germany, was a necessary measure to satisfy the mutinous praetorians under the prefect Casperius Aelianus, who had been a staunch supporter of Domitian.[51] The whole affair was not far removed from a coup d'état, with shades of not just January 69 but also, as we have seen, January 89. In each case it is a governor of Germany—Vitellius, Saturninus, and then Trajan—who rises up.[52] Of course Nerva's forced adoption of Trajan was more successful than Galba's of Piso, and the crisis of 96–98 did not explode like the crisis of 68–69 had.[53] But by concluding the narrative of the *Histories* at the precipice of this crisis—and not with Nerva's reign or within Trajan's—is Tacitus not compelling his reader to consider that the civil warring narrated in *Histories* 1–3 was very nearly repeated, and that all of it *can* be easily repeated?

The *Histories* were not Tacitus' last word on civil war. Readers of his next work, the *Annals*, have discussed how Tacitus presents the reigns of the

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51 Dio, 68.3.3–4. Pliny's account (*Pan.* 7–9) makes no mention of the praetorian threat, but does refer to the perilous state of the empire under Nerva (see 6.3, 7.3, and 8.4–5).

52 Of Trajan Syme (1958) 13 asks: "Would posterity ever believe that a general who commanded a large, powerful, and devoted army was not made emperor by that army, that Rome not Germany conferred the cognomen of 'Germanicus'?" Then at 14: "Trajan was not proclaimed by the soldiers. Nevertheless, the German command goes far to explain his elevation. The friends and allies who extorted that appointment from Nerva were not devoid of foresight." He addresses the crisis / coup of 96–98 at 7–18. See too Griffin (2000) 84–96 and Eck (2002). And see Syme (1958) 130–131 and 150–156 and (1970) 15–18 for the idea that Nerva's crisis is reflected in the depiction of Galba's in *Hist.* 1. Morgan (2006) 266 expresses skepticism. On the *near* correspondences between 68–69 and 96–98, see also Cole (1992) 240–244 and Ash (2009) 89–90, who suggests that "embedded in the account is a hint of counterfactual history, raising the possibility that the civil war could have been replayed in 97" (90). It comes as no surprise that Tacitus never did treat the "most blessed age" (*Agr.* 3.1) of Nerva and Trajan, as he promises there and again at *Hist.* 1.1.4. On his possible disillusionment with Trajan, see Syme (1958) 481–503, Rutledge (1998), and Woodman (2009c) 39–43.

53 And so another Priam / Pompey episode, another fall by an outmatched old monarch, was narrowly averted.

Julio-Claudians as having the conditions of civil war.[54] For example, it is not without significance that he commits a substantial portion of the work's opening book to the treatment of the civil-war-like mutinies in Pannonia and Germany.[55] And later in the first hexad his Tiberius is cast unmistakably as the besieger of his own city.[56] After Tiberius' execution of the associates of Sejanus in 33 CE, the slaughter at Rome is made to look no less indiscriminate and gory than it was at Cremona in *Histories* 3.33, or Rome in *Histories* 4.1: *iacuit immensa strages, omnis sexus, omnis aetas, inlustres ignobiles, dispersi aut aggerati* (*Ann.* 6.19.2: "The carnage lying around was immeasurable: every sex, every age, the illustrious and the ignoble, scattered about or piled up").[57] Elizabeth Keitel has also considered the similarities in language and imagery between Tacitus' précis of political life under Augustus at *Annals* 1.4.1–2 and his snapshot of the conditions of civil war in the late Republic at *Annals* 3.28.1.[58] Each period is characterized in essence by the abandonment of law and custom, as the two conditions—disorder and order, war and peace—elide uncomfortably into one another in Tacitus' text.[59] When exactly did civil war at Rome come to an end? Under the empire, with its ever-present potential for oppressiveness, how is civil war—or its absence—defined? These questions about the repetitiveness and seeming limitlessness of Roman civil war clearly stayed with Tacitus when he went on to write the *Annals*.

The prominence of this motif in Tacitus' conception of imperial history seems to be clearly articulated in the pivotal chapter *Histories* 1.50. In Chapter 1 I examined how here Tacitus presents the memories of past civil wars by the Romans of January 69 as hauntingly reflective of the wars narrated

54 Keitel (1984), Woodman (1988) 186–190, O'Gorman (2000) 20–45, and Damon (2010a). See also Martin and Woodman (1989) 226–227.

55 With frequent reference in these accounts to civil war "proper," at *Ann.* 1.19.3, 1.36.2, 1.43.3, and 1.49.1. On the thematic significance of these mutinies, see Syme (1958) 375, Pelling (1993) 68–69, O'Gorman (2000) 23–41, Woodman (2006), and Hardie (2010) 11–17 (with further bibliography). And see note 128 in Chapter 1 on the language of madness in these passages.

56 See Keitel (1984) 307, who discusses *Ann.* 6.19.2, as well as the language of the siege at *Ann.* 4.58.3, 6.1.2, and 6.39.2.

57 See above in this epilogue on Tacitus' similar use of the language of the *urbs capta* in Montanus' indictment of Regulus at *Histories* 4.42.4.

58 Keitel (1984) 315–316, echoing Koestermann (1963) on 1.4.1, observes how "Tacitus brings the Augustan regime paradoxically close to the anarchy of civil war" (316). O'Gorman (2000) 20–22 looks at the term *uersus ... status*, used of the Augustan principate at *Ann.* 1.4.1, as a translation of and new twist upon Thucydidean *stasis*.

59 Note in particular *Ann.* 1.4.1 (*nihil usquam prisci et integri moris*) and *Ann.* 3.28.1 (*non mos, non ius*).

in *Histories* 1–3. One other detail that he places among the Romans' recollections of the past has a conspicuous repetition in the narrative of the *Histories*. At 1.50.2 Tacitus states that, prior to the recollection of events from past civil wars, the Romans were discussing "the recent examples of a savage peace" (*recentia* **saeuae pacis** *exempla*). This description of the "savage peace" under the Julio-Claudians (or at least under the last of their dynasty, Nero) corresponds very closely with Tacitus' introduction of the Flavian period in the opening line of the *Histories*' table of contents, where he promises a work "savage even in its peace" (*ipsa etiam* **pace saeuum**, 1.2.1).[60] As I discussed above, this phrase, along with further imagery later in 1.2, gives notice that Tacitus will present the post-war narrative as in many ways a savage, bloody, informer-filled continuation of civil war. So, when he depicts the Romans of 1.50 as having just finished discussing the "savage peace" under the Julio-Claudians, he surely commands the reader's attention back to 1.2.1, with the result that the savage peace of the Flavians emerges as a repetition / continuation of that very same condition under the Julio-Claudians.[61] Put another way, not only does Roman internecine savagery cross the boundary of war / peace, as we have seen in the continuity of imagery from Books 1–3 to Book 4 of the *Histories*; but this very paradox is also made to stretch beyond and before the work's opening terminus, back into the Julio-Claudian era.[62] To these *saeuae pacis exempla*, to the repetition *back* of the theme of ongoing civil war, Tacitus turns in his next work.

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[60] O'Gorman (1995) 122 notes this parallel, and sees in the phrase *recentia saeuae pacis exempla* an emulative reference to Lucan, one victim of Nero's savage peace.

[61] And the dynasties themselves have very similar arcs, each ending with its own *enfant terrible*. So Syme (1958) 43 ("The Flavian dynasty developed like the Julii and the Claudii, degenerate and intolerable"); Boyle (2003) 6 ("given the overt similarities between Domitian's reign and that of Nero, not unnoticed by the Roman historians, the Flavian dynasty could be seen from a distance as a replay of the Julio-Claudians in fast-forward mode"); and Damon (2003) on *Hist.* 1.15.1 ("the experience of Domitian's principate will have reinforced the lessons learned under Nero").

[62] This image is extended even further back, into Augustus' reign, at *Ann.* 1.10.4, when the Romans of 14 CE recall the *pacem … cruentam* under Rome's first emperor.

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TLL *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (Leipzig 1900–).

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